

THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION

February
2007

ANIMATIONTM

MAGAZINE



+
Afro Samurai:
When Anime Meets
'70s-Era Grit

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**Happily
N'Ever After**
Delivers More Fractured
Fairy Tales



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Storyboarding in an Animated Feature Production

Simon Wells

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Ian McKellen - Voice of the Toad

Writing in an Animated Feature Production

Dick Clement & Ian La Frenais and
Chris Lloyd & Joe Keenan and Will Davies



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ANIMATION MAGAZINE

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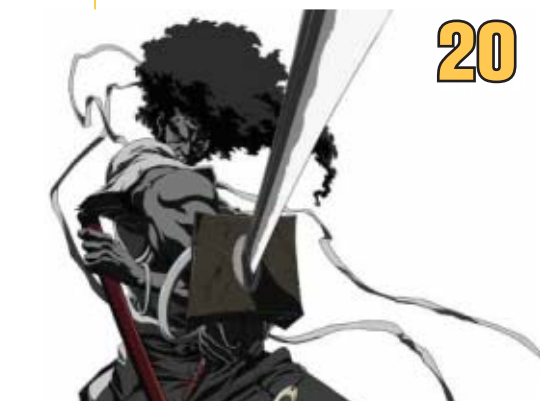
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On the Cover:

Directed by Paul Bolger, *Happily N'Ever After* puts fairy tale villains in charge of the CG action.

Correction: Disney Channel's upcoming new show is called *Phineas & Ferb*. It's created by Dan Povenmire and exec produced by Swampy Marsh. Jim McCampbell is the head of the computer animation department at Ringling School of Art & Design.



42



As we get ready to send this first issue of 2007 to the printer, we got several pieces of good news regarding our beloved animation industry. The year-end reports in the major newspapers and trade papers pointed to the fact that despite all the doom-and-gloom predictions, many of the animated features released theatrically in 2006 performed remarkably well at the box office. In addition to the box-office muscle demonstrated by blockbusters such as *Cars*, *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, *Happy Feet*, *Over the Hedge* and *Monster House*, it was interesting to see the profit ratio of under-the-radar movies such as *Curious George*, *The Wild* and *Hoodwinked* in the global playing field.

We're hoping that the good news continues to spread as we slowly move into another animated calendar year. This month, we have behind-the-scenes stories about the new Lionsgate release *Happily N'Ever After*, produced by one of the most respected men in toon town, John H. Williams. You can also read Ryan Ball's wonderful article about Spike TV's soon-to-be-a-cult-fave series *Afro Samurai*. We have an insightful piece about high-def cartoons

penned by the always-reliable Chris Grove. On the visual effects front, you can learn all about the Oscar race by checking out a nice analytical piece by Barbara Robertson. And for a bit of prehistoric knowledge, read Ron Magid's info-packed article about the neat CG tricks that went into bringing the t-rex and his buddies to life in the holiday hit, *Night at the Museum*.

We also just got word that First Look Pictures has picked up the first Adult Swim theatrical feature *Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie Film For Theaters* (yes, that's the actual name—We have *Borat* to blame for

that one!). Written, produced and directed by Matt Maiellaro and Dave Willis, this is probably the first movie in the history of the art form to center on the adventures of a meat wad, a milk shake and a bag of fries! That means with the inclusion of Disney's *Meet the Robinsons* and Imagi/Warner Bros.' *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (TMNT), we have three big animated features opening in March. Let's rumble!

As we gear up to further expand our international coverage in the new year, we'd love to hear story ideas and suggestions from you, our faithful readers. Please don't hesitate to contact me or any of our enthusiastic editorial team by emailing us at edit@animationmagazine.net. Believe it or not, reading your feedback can really put a certain zing into our work day! Happy 2007, animation amigos!

Ramin

Ramin Zahed
Editor-in-Chief
rzahed@animationmagazine.net

BRB Is Our Winner!

Last month, we asked all you talented folks in the toon business to enter our big 20th Anniversary issue contest and submit ads featuring characters from your toon company's history. We were pleased to receive so many colorful and clever entries from toon shops all over the world. However, the deluge of entries just made our job of picking a winner much more difficult. It was a tough decision, but our panel of judges picked Spanish studio **BRB's** beautifully designed page touting the company's popular creations through the years. We congratulate **Carlos Biern** and his talented team at the successful Madrid-based operation who won our contest and get a free 2-page ad in an issue of their choice. We also have to give a shout-out to our friends at Vancouver-based **Studio B** whose entry came in at a very close second. Believe us when we tell you that your talent and animated projects always put a smile on our faces—even when all your ad dollars are spent!



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DREAMWORKS ANIMATION & PARAMOUNT PICTURES

would like to thank the International Animated Film Society, ASIFA Hollywood and proudly congratulate our
ANNIE AWARD NOMINEE



OVER THE HEDGE

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE

CHARACTER ANIMATION
IN A FEATURE PRODUCTION
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IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
Nicolas Marlet

DIRECTING
IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
Tim Johnson & Karey Kirkpatrick

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IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
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STORYBOARDING
IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
Thom Enriquez

STORYBOARDING
IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
Gary Graham

VOICE ACTING
IN AN ANIMATED FEATURE PRODUCTION
Wanda Sykes – Voice of Stella

The Animation Planner February

2 The Pang Brothers deliver their first English-lingo horror pic, *The Messengers*, about a mysterious darkness that takes over a North Dakota sunflower farm.



Ben 10

6 The planets must be aligned because there are way too many great toons released on DVD! Among the many we'd love to get our hands on: *Ben 10: Season 1*, *Charlie & Lola: Vol. 3*, *Cinderella III, Disaster! The Movie*, *Robotech—The Shadow Chronicles*, *Teen Titans: Trouble in Tokyo* and the 40-minute oddity, *The Amazing Screw-On Head*.

7-9 The **KidScreen Summit** in New York City focuses on the business of children's entertainment on TV (www.kidscreensummit.com).



9 Find out what made Mr. Lecter so damn messed up in director Peter Webber's adaptation of *Hannibal Rising*, starring Gong Li and Rhys Ifans. Time to use those frequent flyer miles to attend the awesome **Animex Int'l Festival of Animation and Computer Games** at the University of Teesside in Middlesbrough, U.K. (www.animex.net).

11 You'll have to clone yourself to attend two of the top events in the toon and vfx industry tonight: First up, head for the **34th Annual Annie Awards** (www.annieawards.org) ceremony at the Alex Theatre in Glendale Calif...then, maybe you can rush to catch some of the **Visual Effects Society Awards** ceremony at the Kodak Grand Ballroom in Hollywood (www.vesawards.com).

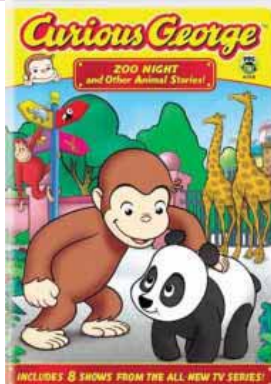
13 A wide variety of DVD titles hit the stores today, from *Dora the Explorer: Musical School Days* and *Winx Club: Season 2, Vol. 1* to *Sonic X: Season 6* and *Zatch Bell Vol. 8*. Also up for grabs are volumes 3 and 4 in the *Walt Disney's It's a Small World of Fun* series.



16 The much-loved children's fantasy comes to cinematic life in director Gabor Csupo's live-action feature debut, *Bridge to Terabithia*. Also opening today is the new Marvel/Sony feature *Ghost Rider*, starring Nicolas Cage as the vengeful superhero and Eva Mendes as his love interest. Peter Fonda, Sam Elliot and Donal Logue round up the supporting cast.



16-25 European animation fans and creators will be in Brussels this week, taking in the cool sights and sounds of the **Anima 2007** festival (<http://folioscope.awn.com>).



20 Get some quality time with the Great Dane and his cowardly master in *What's New Scooby-Doo? Complete First Season* DVD (\$19.98). You may also take home Universal's *Curious George's Zoo Night and Other Animal Stories* (\$16.98), which features almost two hours of the best-loved simian, or go for demonic battles and Ninja escapades of VIZ Media's hot anime title, *Naruto, Vol. 9* (\$19.98).

23-25 It's only the second year for the **New York Comic-Con** at the Javits Center, but the word on the street is that it's going to be even bigger than 2006 (www.nycomiccon.com).



23 The Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art (MoCCA) will host **Stan Lee: A Retrospective** exhibit through July 3 (www.moccany.org).



24 The New York Comic-Con hosts the **American Anime Awards** at the New Yorker hotel in midtown Manhattan.

25 Tune in to ABC tonight at 5 p.m. as Ellen DeGeneres hosts the **79th Annual Academy Awards** (www.oscar.org).



27 Several cult favorites show up in DVD stories today: BCI Eclipse opens the vaults and makes Filmation's *Ghostbusters Series Vol. 1* available for \$39.99. For the younger ones, there's Disney's 90-minute package *Little Einsteins: Legend of the Golden Pyramid*, while anime fans can go for the fun adventures with *One Piece: Vol. 7*. Of course, there's always Media Blasters' *Voltron: Defender of the Universe, Vol. 3*.



To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail cwebb@animationmagazine.net

WHAT A LONG,
TERRIFIC RIDE
WE TOOK TOGETHER!!



WE'LL ALL MISS YOU,
JOE!

In Memory of Joseph Barbera
1911 - 2006



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Close Encounters with Toon Players

Fred Schaefer
PorchLight Entertainment

Job Title: Senior VP & producer, Animation
Years in the biz: Oh, 15, give or take a few. Really, who's counting?

Hometown: New Orleans, Louisiana

How I got into animation: My first industry job was as the assistant to the president of an educational film company, Churchill Films; while there we launched Churchill Entertainment and began developing/producing children's television programming (ABC Weekend Specials, anyone? Beverly Cleary's *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*?). After that I did a stint at Walt Disney Television Animation developing series, specials and eventually direct-to-video sequels. In 1995, I left to develop and produce for PorchLight.

Favorite vacation spot: The Swiss/French Alps to clear my head; a big city (New York, London, Hong Kong) to fill it back up with glorious noise and cultural clutter.

What I thought I wanted to do when I was a kid: First, a fireman. Then an attorney (although I'm quite certain I had no idea what one actually did). Later, a writer. Funny, as an animation producer I now find myself involved in all three.

Toons I love: I'm currently catching up on *Teen Titans* and loving it. The writing is so economical. It's really the most inventive, funny action show around.

Why I love my job: Where else would I get to debate the motives of a boy mummy who still thinks he's pharaoh, or a disgruntled alien girl whose parents send her to repeat the fifth grade on Earth? Then there are the talented artists, writers, cartoonists I get to play with day in and day out. Thank you!

Role models: Music producer, Brian Eno, for being an instrument to help others reach their best, and a creative instrument in his own right. One can only aspire to this level of artistry and inventiveness.

TV shows I never miss: *The Office*, *Entourage*, *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, *Arrested Development*. (With my DVD collection I'm pretending it never went away!)

Musical tastes: At the moment, I'm hooked on My Morning Jacket's terrific new live album, *Okonokos*; Beck's *The Information*; and Wilco's *Kicking Television*, another live recording.

Things I look for in a project/show: Anything that makes me leap out of my chair, be it great designs, compelling characters or a unique, unexpected take on an all-too-familiar concept.

Do's and don'ts of pitching: Do be yourself; don't begin a pitch with the words 'we fade in on...' and proceed to give me a shot by shot explanation of your story.

Industry sayings I hope I never have to hear again: "We're looking for our *SpongeBob*!"

What can we expect to see from your company next: Our first animated theatrical feature, and building bigger, multi-platform brands.

Upcoming projects you're excited about: *Katie & Rookie*, a preschool series we're co-producing with Telegael (Ireland) for Discovery Kids; it has beautiful character designs with soul.

On the 2D vs. 3D debate: It appears to be a non-issue in television programming, where 2D and 3D are utilized for projects that suit them best, and the audience is happy with either as long as the content is funny, exciting and relatable. It's only in U.S. theatrical animation where 2D has been abandoned due to poor box-office performance. (Using that argument, and the recent spate of poor-performing 3D features, I'm surprised we're not debating the demise of 3D!) If you tell a good story that doesn't insult the intelligence of the audience, it won't matter if it's a 2D or 3D feature—people will come because they are hungry for stories that entertain and resonate with their lives. Hat's off to Europe and Asia for continuing to produce 2D animated features. While these films attract limited audiences, they continue to push the boundaries of an art form that is not dead yet, so let's stop debating it!

What I'm doing on a typical Sunday: A cup of coffee and the *Sunday Times* on the patio; cooking; piddling around the house all day, doing everything and nothing at once. ■

—Claire Webb



Books We Love

**Disney Dossiers:
Files of Character
from the Walt Disney
Studios.**

**By Jeff Kurtti [Disney
Editions, \$24.95]**

Despite what some may believe, we don't get all our book inspirations here at the office. Just last Sunday, for example, after a long exhausting holiday shopping spree, I stumbled across Jeff Kurtti's amazing *Disney Dossiers* book just by accident in my local Barnes & Noble store. My eyes immediately lit up as I discovered this visually striking tome put together by Disney historian and author of books about Disneyland, Walt Disney World, *Mulan*, *Treasure Planet*, *A Bug's Life*, *Atlantis* and *The Little Mermaid*. With full access to the Disney Feature Animation's Research Library, Kurtti assembled all kinds of killer reproductions of drawings and conceptual material from our favorite Mouse House features and shorts from the past eight decades.

For example, there are pre-production sketches for Beast (*Beauty and the Beast*), The Blue Fairy (*Pinocchio*), Bernard and Bianca (*The Rescuers*), Snow White (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*) and the Wild Boys (*Peter Pan*) which offer fans beautifully drawn alternatives to the final visuals with which we're familiar. Needless to say, I forgot about all the people on my holiday shopping list and bought the 160-page paperback on the spot. So, thank you, Mr. Kurtti, for giving us one of the best books of the year. Your *Dossiers* is one of my most prized possessions, right up there with my Wallace & Gromit toys and Miyazaki DVDs.

— Ramin Zahed



Industry Mourns the Loss of Animation Giant Joseph Barbera (1911-2006)

The animation industry has lost another legend with the passing of Joseph Barbera, who teamed with William Hanna to create famed cartoon studio Hanna-Barbera Prods. in 1944. At the age of 95, Barbera was still an active member of the Warner Bros. Animation team and was listed as exec producer for series such as *What's New Scooby-Doo?* and *Tom and Jerry Tales*. In 2005, he wrote, co-storyboarded and co-directed the new Tom and Jerry theatrical short titled *KarateGuard*. He died last month of natural causes at his home in Studio City, Calif. with wife Sheila at his side.



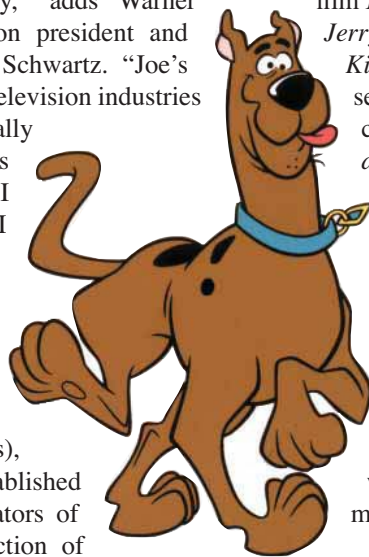
"Joe Barbera truly was an animation and television legend," says Warner Bros. chairman and CEO Barry Meyer. "From the Stone Age to the Space Age and from primetime to Saturday mornings, syndication and cable, the characters he created with his late partner, William Hanna, are not only animated superstars, but also a very beloved part of American pop culture. While he will be missed by his family and friends, Joe will live on through his work."



"Bill created a landmark television production model and Joe filled it with funny, original show ideas and memorable characters that will stand for all time as his ultimate legacy," adds Warner Bros. Animation president and friend Sander Schwartz. "Joe's

contributions to both the animation and television industries are without parallel—he has been personally responsible for entertaining countless millions of viewers across the globe. I was inspired to work alongside Joe and I am proud to have had the blessing of his friendship."

Working for MGM, Barbera and Hanna created the beloved cat-and-mouse team of Tom and Jerry in 1940. While the theatrical shorts won seven Academy Awards (and 14 nominations), it was their work in television that established Barbera and his partner as true innovators of animation. Working on budgets a fraction of



the size they were used to dealing with at MGM, the duo designed a system for limited animation and introduced generations to such indelible characters as Huckleberry Hound, Yogi Bear, Quickdraw McGraw, The Flintstones and The Jetsons, to name a few. Hanna-Barbera received eight Emmys, including the Governors Award of the Academy of TV Arts and Sciences in 1988.

Hanna-Barbera continued to produce TV animation through the 1980s, churning out such shows as *The Smurfs*, *Tom and Jerry Kids* and *Pac-Man*. Turner Broadcasting acquired the Hanna-Barbera library in 1991, changing the name of the studio first to H-B

Productions Company, then Hanna-Barbera Cartoons Inc. The library eventually found a home on Cartoon Network, where new Hanna-Barbera productions are developed under the Cartoon Network Studios banner.

During his 80s and into his 90s, Barbera continued to report to his office regularly, taking an active role in the creation of new Hanna-Barbera projects. In 1992, he served as a creative consultant for the animated feature film *Tom and*



Jerry: The Movie, and exec produced *Tom and Jerry Kids*, a Hanna-Barbera/Fox Children's Network series that ran from 1990 to 1994. He also saw his characters live on in the new television series *Tom and Jerry Tales*, which premiered this Fall during the *Kids' WB!* block on The CW.

Barbera and Hanna were elected by their peers to the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Hall of Fame in 1994, the same year Joseph penned his autobiography, *My Life In Toons*. In March of 2005, the Academy unveiled a wall sculpture depicting the toon creators surrounded by some of their most famous characters. Hanna passed away in 2001. Barbera is survived by his wife, Sheila, and his three children by a previous marriage — Jayne, Neal and Lynn.

—Ryan Ball

Free Looney Tunes Classics Debut on In2TV.com

by Claire Webb

Everything old is new again this month as AOL and Warner Bros. have teamed up to debut a new *Looney Tunes* channel on their current broadband venture, In2TV.com. Previously launched in 2006, the site offers the largest source of long-form episodic television programming ever made available online. Thousands of full-length episodes from classic Warner Bros. shows from the past 40 years are available for viewers. Shows range anywhere from series such as *Growing Pains* and *Adventures of Superman* to *Gilligan's Island* and *Batman: The Animated Series*. And the best part about all this new content? You can watch streaming video of your favorite toon episodes for FREE!

With the launch of the *Looney Tunes* channel in mid-January, there will be 100 rare shorts ranging from the early cartoons of the late 1930s, to episodes on through the 1960s. Porky, Daffy and Bugs are each featured in 20 episodes beginning with their first appearance on *Looney Tunes* and spanning over some of their most classic performances throughout the years.

General manager of In2TV is none other than veteran exec Garth Ancier, former head of the WB TV Network and head of development at FOX-TV. He points out that viewers will get to see the evolution and change of these characters over time. Other characters like Sylvester and Tweety, Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, Foghorn Leghorn and Speedy Gonzales get similar coverage on the channel, but they have fewer episodes in this launch. "We are doing [the shorts] in chronological order and we try to have the very first episode of

every character," says Ancier on the channel's structure. Indeed the site does feature episodes from the early days like *Porky's Hare Hunt* (1938), which introduced audiences to Bugs Bunny, as well as Daffy Duck's first appearance in *Porky and Daffy* (1938). Other favorite shorts like *What's Up, Doc?*, *Porky in Wackylund* (debut of Mel Blanc's voice as Porky) and many others conjure nostalgic memories of these iconic characters.

The user-friendly site also includes trivia and games that test users knowledge on their favorite shows; but for now this content will not accompany the *Looney Tunes* channel. "We are just going to have pristine versions of all the episodes," assures Ancier. The structure of the channel will not change in the near future he says, but the episodes will eventually be updated and change monthly over time. With so many favorite characters and episodes, it is difficult to include all of them for the channel's debut.

Ancier stresses that the best part of this whole venture is "the ability to have access to all these programs anytime, day or night, for free." *Looney Tunes* is part of the core foundation of Warner Bros. Animation and will only add to the extensive, ever growing content on In2TV. In the future, Ancier says we can expect to see "the interface become much more intuitive and [the site] much more of a theater experience." For now users can enjoy access to 100 classic *Looney Tunes* shorts on this unique broadband network. ■

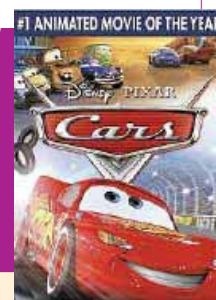
You can access *Looney Tunes* programs beginning in January on www.in2tv.com.



FRAME-BY-FRAME



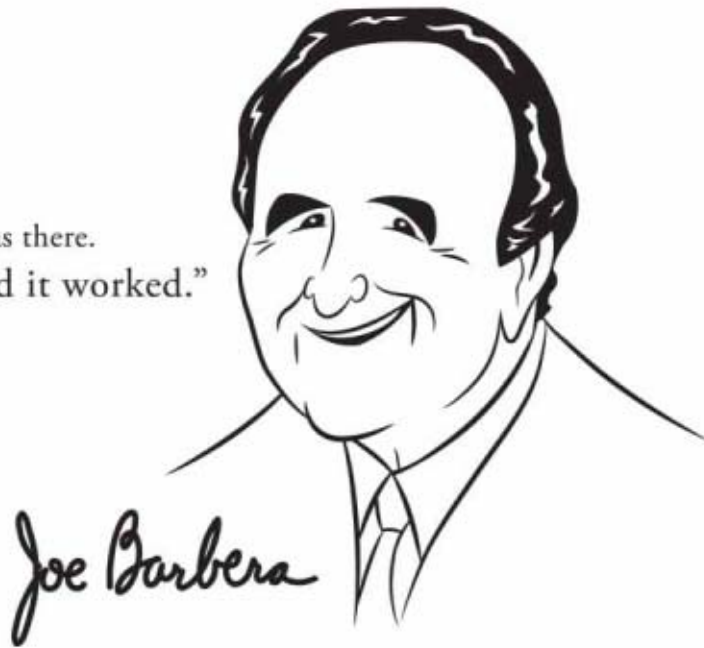
Best-Selling Animated DVDs of 2006



1. Cars (Disney)
2. The Little Mermaid 2-Disc Special (Disney)
3. The Lady and the Tramp: 50th Anniversary (Disney)
4. Final Fantasy VII—Advent Children (Sony)
5. Wallace & Gromit—Curse of the Were-Rabbit (Paramount)
6. Howl's Moving Castle (Disney)
7. Schoolhouse Rock! 30th Anniversary (Disney)
8. Over the Hedge (Paramount)
9. Chicken Little (Disney)
10. Tim Burton's Corpse Bride (Warner Bros.)

Source: 2006 survey of amazon.com

"The magic was there.
And it worked."



We'll miss you.



Meet New York's New ANImagician!

ANImagic's Jeff Nodelman talks about the studio he helped create after abdicating as CEO of his own successful independent animation house. **by Jake Friedman**

As far as new animation studios go, it's hard to find one with the kind of zest and creative freedom as ANImagic, headed at the canopy organization of Creative Group in New York City by Jeff Nodelman. Nodelman came fresh off Noodle Soup Studios (*Venture Brothers*, *Hopeless Pictures*), an indie animation house he founded five years ago, to head animation production and I.P. development for projects at ANImagic.

"This place here is built for how best to tell a story," asserts Nodelman. "It doesn't matter who the idea comes from, whether it's a top supervisor or from the guy who cleans the kitchen." While no longer a CEO, Nodelman wears his new position with pride. "It was fun to be an entrepreneur, but I'm a storyteller at heart."

Nodelman was hired by Creative Group's CEO and chairman Joseph Avallone and president Tom DeFeo earlier this year to help build an animation studio in an already burgeoning multi-media company. "As a CPA, Joe is the real businessman and Tom is an Emmy-award-winning editor with decades of experience, and they both have a distinct vision for what they want this place to be," says Nodelman. "Tom is a storytelling pro, and he's directing one of our flagship projects, *Nate the Great*."

ANImagic is slated to produce 40 22-minute Flash-animated episodes of *Nate the Great* for PBS, in which

Nodelman acts as art director, to begin airing in 2008. In addition, the studio is producing an original CG 7-minute short for the festival circuit called *Tree Elves*, an international project utilizing Creative Group's wholly owned Beijing animation facility.

The beginning of this year, ANImagic goes into production on its first feature film, *The Fourth Horseman*.

It will be the first animated feature for Fangoria Entertainment, one of the most recognizable names and a leader in the world of horror and also a subsidiary of Creative Group. Both projects will be directed and written by Nodelman. The studio already got some attention for its online revival of *SpeedRacer* earlier this year.

"I want this place to be said in the same breath as the great storytelling studios in Los Angeles. As you walk through ANImagic, it's like an animation campus because we have the ability to go from concept through completion, just like the big Hollywood boys. Real estate is expensive in the city and any room that doesn't generate revenue can be seen as wasted space," says Nodelman, "but ANImagic is fully funded by its parent company, the Creative Group, and their goal is to be creating and working on projects that we own the rights to, that we can then generate revenue through. The best way we can do that is to have a place where the artists can get together and

talk through the process."

Because the studio is producing self-financed projects, there's very little red tape for the creative team to hurdle. "Joe and Tom challenge everyone to do the job we were all brought on to do. When we bring ideas to them, if they like it, we move right ahead. If not, we literally just go back to the drawing board."

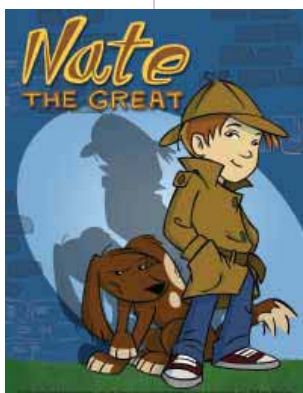
The studio also sports 98,000 square feet of facility space over four buildings, as well as the highest-end tools for all the employees. In the back are sound stages for stop motion and motion capture, not to mention recording facilities. "If it's got a button on it, we make sure everyone who could use one has one," adds Nodelman. Perhaps that's why ANImagic has been able to bring in artists from Canada, Ireland and L.A., as well as seasoned animation heavyweights like storyboard artists Diane Kredensor and Jeff Buckland.

Clearly, Nodelman has high aspirations for ANImagic and their projects. "But my greatest production is my two boys, Dylan and Spencer. And I want to sit in a movie theater with my wife, Melanie, and my two boys, eating popcorn, and watching a film that Daddy created that was once their bedtime story. That, I think, would be the ultimate dream come true." ■

For more info, visit www.animagicstudios.com



Jeff Nodelman



FRAME-BY-FRAME

Marvel Builds King's *Dark Tower* Comic

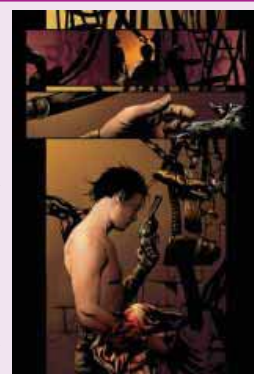
Marvel Comics has announced a collaboration of epic proportions with renowned horror novelist Stephen King. The comic division of Marvel Entertainment recently signed on to launch a comic-book series based on King's saga *The Dark Tower*. Spanning 25 years, the story centers on Roland Deschain, the last Gunslinger from a long-lost world, whose life quest is to save the Dark Tower. King's seven bestselling books will be translated into comics by highlighting the events and life experiences of young Roland, ultimately revealing the origin of his burdensome destiny. King will supervise the project to ensure the comics develop the original story and that the new stories continue to supplement and define the saga's mythology.

To adapt King's work, the comic-book powerhouse has also enlisted proficient author and comic-book writer Peter David to script the first seven issues of the new *Dark Tower* stories. David has been known previously for novels like *Sir Apropos of Nothing* and the *Psi-Man* adventure series as well as his work as co-creator and author of the *Star Trek: New Frontier* series for Pocket Books. Also on the roster is Eisner-award winning artist Jae Lee who will assist David and King in translating this masterful storytelling into a visually stimulating project.

"As a lifelong fan of Marvel comic books, and as an adult reader who's seen comics 'come of age' and take their rightful place in the world of fantasy and science fiction, I'm excited to be part of Roland's new incarnation," notes King.

Look for the new Marvel comic *The Dark Tower* in stores on Feb. 7. More more info, visit www.marvel.com.

—Claire Webb



WOW!



Starz Media congratulates Film Roman & their friends at Bolder Media, Bob Boyle, Nick Jr. and Wow! Wow! Wubbzy! on their 2007 Annie Award Nominations!



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a wrist rumbler and a directional wall washer light and controller unit. The satellite lights will change color and intensity as they reproduce up to 16 million different color variations according to the gameplay pallet. Meanwhile, the 2.1 speaker lights and subwoofer offer 160-watt multidirectional sound complete with dynamic bass boost to add even more realism to the proceedings.

Particularly popular with focus groups, the desk fans operate at variable speeds, going all the way up to 5,000 RPM to simulate a variety of in-game elements such as wind, collision impact, acceleration and velocity. The blades can spin at full force to give the impression of generated by an airplane propeller in once scene, then drop down to provide a subtle draft from under a door in the next. The fans also provide a drop in ambient temperature to further immerse the player in the game's environment.

The wrist rumbler features two integrated motor drives and variable rotation speed to convey the feeling of movement and augment certain sound effects. This and all other peripherals are centrally controlled by the directional wall washer light unit, which floods the wall behind the PC or laptop screen with colored light through three powerful banks of LEDs.

THQ's *Broken Sword: The Angel of Death* is among the currently amBX-enabled games, while Kuju's *Rail Simulator* and other titles are being developed to take advantage of the technology.

The amBX starter kit retails for \$199 and contains the directional wall washer controller unit and satellite lights, while the \$299 Pro-Gamer Kit adds the satellite 2.1 speaker lights and subwoofer. For \$99 more, gamers can get the Extension Kit, which features a set of desk fans and the wrist rumbler, or they can have it all by purchasing the \$399 Premium Kit. The kits are available in the U.S. and Europe as of January. Additional information can be found at www.ambx.com. ■

Ambient Thrills

Philips takes immersion to a new level with amBX
by Ryan Ball

The newest generation of video-game consoles is changing the way many players interact with the hottest titles, but what about the dedicated PC gamers? What can these Pentium warriors look forward to in terms of hardware innovation? Philips believes it has the answer with something it calls amBX, a technology that uses light, color, sound, vibration and air flow to offer players a "sensory surround experience" through strategically placed peripherals.

Imagine yourself in a darkened room playing the hottest new first-person shooter. Your character emerges from a dark cave and suddenly sunlight hits your wall. Enemies hot on your tail, you turn to fire your sub-machine gun and feel the rumble of the weapon at your wrists. Dodging bullets, you dive off a cliff, wind hitting your face as you plummet to the water below. Splashing down, your world becomes blue as you swim beneath the surface and make your getaway.

What you're experiencing is something Philips calls ambient intelligence.

The game developer has included a special script in the software that controls series of light emitters placed around the PC, a rumble strip that doubles as a wrist pad and a set of small fans that sit on the desktop.

In the 1950s, B-movie producer and legendary showman William Castle sought to enhance the movie-going experience by placing joy buzzers in theater seats and floating skeletons down the isles during key scenes in such schlock classics as *The Tingler* and *The House on Haunted Hill*. That spirit is very much alive in Philips' amBX system, which aims to bring the gaming experience out of the monitor. The setup works best with games specially designed with the technology in mind, but you can also breathe new life into the old titles on your shelf with the amBX FX Generator, which synchronizes the lighting effects with what's happening on screen.

The deluxe peripheral kit includes a pair of left and right satellite lights, a pair of left and right satellite 2.1 speaker lights and subwoofer, a pair of desk fans,

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 **ARS ELECTRONICA**



A Far-From-Grim Fairy Tale

After several years of development and a shift from 2D to CG, *Happily N'Ever After* finally makes its big-screen splash.

by Ramin Zahed



Film critic Roger Ebert once wrote, "Each film is only as good as its villain. Since the heroes and gimmicks tend to repeat from film to film, only a great villain can transform a good try into a triumph." The new animated feature *Happily N'Ever After* certainly takes this point to heart, allowing the villains of Cinderella and various other familiar fairy tales to take control of the story.

Produced by John H. Williams (the *Shrek* movies, *Valiant*) and animated at Mental Images, Berliner Film Company's new CGI production studio, and several other shops in Australia and Canada (including Nitrogen in Vancouver), the feature looks at what happens when Frieda, Cinderella's wicked stepmother takes control of every fairy tale in Fairy Tale Land. Williams, who was asked to oversee the project prior to the release of the first *Shrek* movie, says he and the screenwriter Rob Moreland sought to explore the premise of an upset in the balance of good and evil.

"We talked about the notion of what happens when the wizard goes away on vacation and the assistants who

are in charge of the balance of good and evil tip the scales," says Williams. "It's all about turning the Cinderella story on its head, and giving the villains their chance and day in the sun."

Once Moreland delivered the script, an impressive list of Hollywood stars signed on to do the voices—the cast includes Sigourney Weaver as Frieda, Sarah Michelle Gellar as Ella, Patrick Warburton as the self-involved Prince and Freddie Prinze, Jr. as the Prince's downtrodden servant (who is secretly in love with Ella). Additional comic support is provided by Wallace Shawn, George Carlin and Andy Dick.

It was only after the voices were recorded when complications began. "The aspiration for the film originally was to do it as a low-budget film, but then things snowballed," recalls Williams. "Ultimately, it was found out that the foreign markets were only interested in computer-animated movies." As a result, the German funding for the film (which came through Volker Bass and his Berliner Film Group) dictated that a CG studio was to be built to produce the animation. Williams then brought on co-producer J.

Chad Hammes to lead the team, straight after wrapping his work on last year's *Valiant* in January of 2005.

"I think at a certain point, you have to make the best



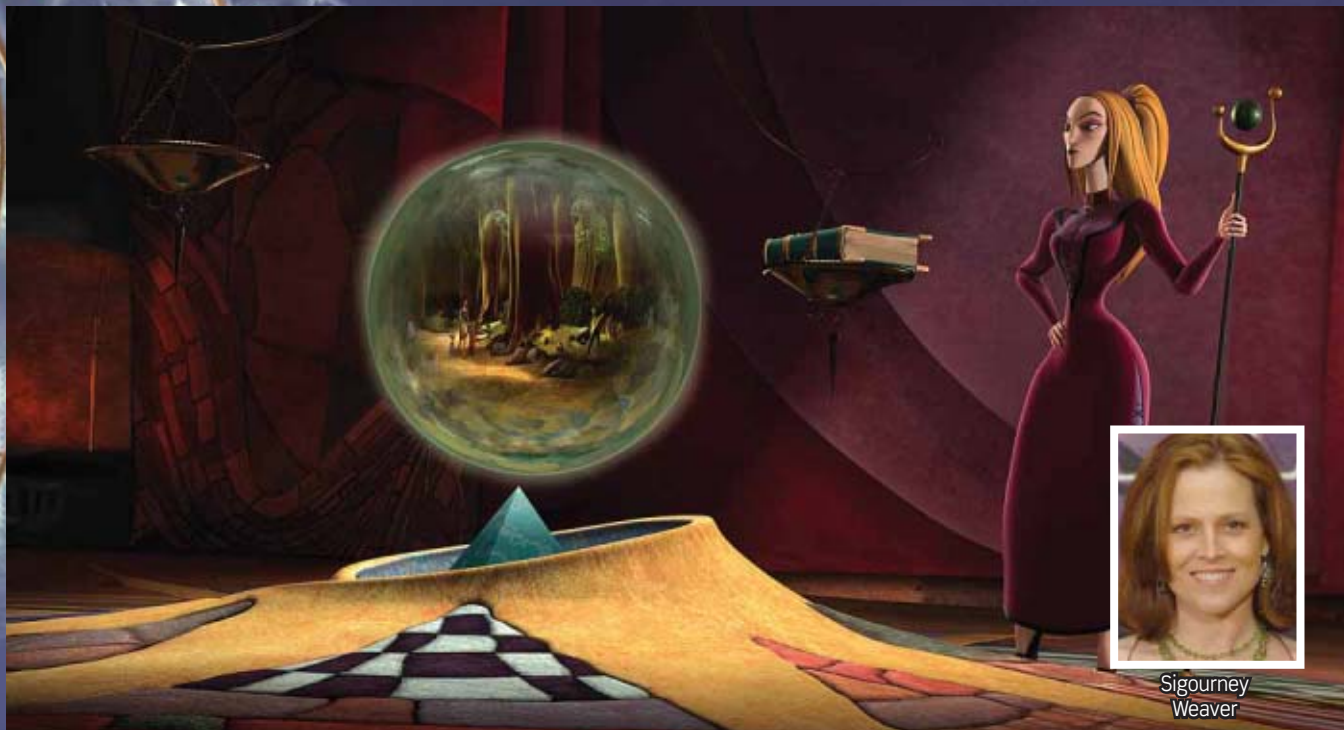
John H. Williams

Simian Surprise:

John H. Williams and his Vanguard team are now working on *Space Chimps*, a new CG-animated feature about two NASA chimps who embark on a fantastic journey in galaxies far, far away.

Directed by Donovan Cook and Norton Virgien, the \$40 million-budgeted film is slated to be released by Fox in 2008 and is funded by Starz Media and foreign pre-sales.



Sigourney
Weaver

choices you can make with the limited budget you have and hope that your story is working well," says Williams as he looks back at the process. "Obviously, it was challenging to produce this film, given the distance between us, so creatively, you have to make some compromises. What was re-



markable was that unlike studio films where you have the opportunity to do ten to 15 animatic passes on a story, here we were limited to one or two animatics, and the whole process was much more script-driven."

When asked to compare *Happily N'Ever After* to Vanguard's 2005 feature *Valiant*, Williams says, "The big difference in our work for *Valiant* was that our production team worked completely from our studio in London.

For *Happily N'Ever After*, we were working with a studio that was owned and operated by the Berlin group. We had a huge responsibility for the creative content, but had little ability to make changes regarding money and time. It's remarkable that Hammes and his team were able to get a production pipeline set up and deliver the animation in less than two years."

For director Paul Bolger, it was crucial to capture the true personality and inner spark of the characters. He videotaped all the voice sessions, and in certain instances, used the footage as reference for the animation. Along with production designer Deane Taylor, Bolger and his animation team strived to create a unique look for the animation. "Deane and I decided that the feel of the world would be like a theme park," notes Bolger. "There's a hand-drawn quality about this world—the lighting, the staging, everything. The same for the characters: They're slightly caricatured. It's very organic and rooted in classic fairy tale book illustration."

The CG team relied on a combination of Maya-based technology, Renderman and Mental Ray to create the specific

look of the movie. As animation director Dino Athanassiou points out, "Our approach was to create very clear, direct performances. There are some nice, subtle performances from Frieda, Rick and Ella. Broader characters like the Prince were made even more cartoony. Then you have other characters like Munk and Mambo and the dwarves and the witches, who are even broader and lend themselves more to the Warner Bros./MGM style of animation from the 1930s and '40s."

The jury may be out on how audiences may react to this latest version of those familiar Grimm fairy tales. However, Sigourney Weaver, who shows a great knack for playing the wicked stepmother in the movie, is optimistic about the film's reception. "I think audiences will love seeing these fairy tales that they know well and watch them get turned inside out in such a delightful funny way," says the actress. "It's quite cathartic to see what happens when all the dark figures start running things. They turn out to be very human too!" ■

Lionsgate releases *Happily N'Ever After* in U.S. theaters on January 5.

FEATURE

Annies to Toast Toon Town Greats Again

by Thomas J. McLean

The Annie Awards are emblematic of the phenomenal growth of animation in the past 20 years. After spending its first two decades handing out lifetime and career achievement honors each year, the Annies now are a full-fledged awards event, offering the year's best honors in six production categories as well as 17 individual achievement honors that are the only awards given to animators for specific types of animation work.

DreamWorks dominated this year's nominations, with *Over the Hedge* and *Flushed Away* earning 17 nominations between them. Pixar and Disney's *Cars* earned nine nominations, tying *Flushed Away* for the most for any single film. The other nominees for top animated feature were Warner Bros.' *Happy Feet*, and Sony Pictures' *Monster House* and *Open Season*.

More people outside animation have paid attention to the Annies since they became a bellwether for the Oscars' animated feature race. The Annies' choice for top film also has won the Oscar every year since the Motion Picture Academy established the category in 2001.

With this year's crop of films and TV shows impressive both for the quantity and quality of features, the announcement of the winners on Feb.

11 at the Alex Theatre in Glendale will be more closely watched than ever. "There are a lot of different approaches to these films and each one has its own attributes and things going for it and I think it's going to be a tough race," says Antran Manoogian, president of ASIFA-Hollywood, the org that hands out the awards.

The most significant change in the Annies this year is what Manoogian calls a "re-direction" of the Winsor McCay Awards. The awards, given in previous years for lifetime achievement, now also consider career achievement, opening consideration up to animators whose careers are still very much in progress, such as this year's recipients Bill Plympton, Genndy Tartakovsky and Andreas Deja. "Certainly, all three of those gentlemen have many more years of work and service to the industry," says Manoogian.

In February, Annies will be given out in six production categories and 17 individual achievement categories covering features, television, commercials and video games, as well as the McCay Award, the June Foray Award and four certificates of merit. This year will also see the 3,800 or so members of ASIFA-Hollywood vote online for the first time. "This is going to allow the voting membership to be able to view the nominees' work," says Manoogian. "The idea here is that an educated voter will make an educated choice."

Committees of no more than five experts determine the nominees. Manoogian says they are instructed to consider only award-worthy material, resulting in some categories having fewer than the maximum of five nominees. That's the case in the new area of game animation and is something Manoogian says he'd like to change. He also notes that the addition of animation categories to other awards shows—the Golden Globes are the most recent to add a category for animated feature—can only better promote the medium.

The Annies, however, remain important for being like a peer-based award, akin to the honors given out by guilds such as the DGA or WGA. "The Annie Awards are animation people honoring their own colleagues, and I think that's what makes the award important," says Manoogian.

Television animation is not getting the same buzz as the feature film variety, he says, but there is a lot more original work done on the small screen than in the past, when pre-sold shows based on toys and revamps of old properties were common. "A lot of the shows are creator driven, they're based on original ideas and concepts," he says.

Cartoon Network's *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, *Charlie and Lola* from Tiger Aspect Productions, *King of the Hill* from 20th Century Fox Television, *The Fairly OddParents* from Nickelodeon and *Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!* from Starz Media's Film Roman are the nominees in the Best TV Series categories.

The short list for Best Animated Short Subject includes Nickelodeon's *Adventure Time*, Thunderbean Animation's *Fumi and the Bad Luck Foot*, Blue Sky Studios' *No Time For Nuts* and Acme Filmworks' *Weird Al Yankovic Don't Download This Song* (animated by Bill Plympton).

As the industry and the world at large pays more attention to animation, Manoogian says he hopes the Annies can be at the forefront of promoting the art form. "Hopefully, there will come a day when the Annies can find a place on TV so that people beyond the animation industry will become aware of the event and find an appreciation of animation and the medium," he says. ■

For more info about animation's big night, visit www.annieawards.org



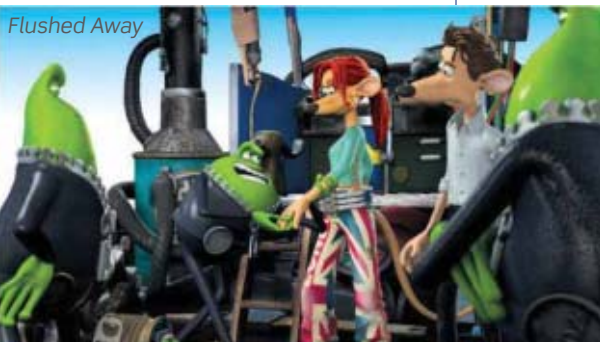
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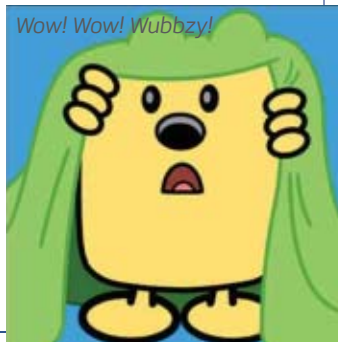
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Happy Feet



Flushed Away



Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!



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When Indie Toons Attack!

Why this may be one of the best years for animation at Park City, Utah's ultra-cool Sundance Festival.

by Ramin Zahed

If anyone needed more solid proof about the growing importance of animation in the indie world, all they have to do is take a look at the rich selection of projects unspooling at the Sundance Festival this month (Jan. 18-28). Alex Weil's *SIGGRAPH* 2006 hit *One Rat Short*, Aaron Augenblick's *Golden Age*, Don Hertzfeldt's *Everything Will Be OK* and Joanna Quinn's multi-award-winning *Dreams and Desires—Family Ties* are some of the more familiar titles selected for the event.

"We had many strong animated titles submitted this year," says programmer Todd Luoto. "We saw a very nice mix of computer animation and traditional 2D work. Specifically, we were looking for good stories and material that we hadn't seen before. What struck me was how there were many films written, directed and animated not by a team of people working together, but by dedicated individuals who spent a lot of time and energy on these personal, labors of love."

One of these impressive labors of love is the 88-minute feature *We Are the Strange*, by self-taught animator who calls himself M dot Strange. The work is described as "*Monsters, Inc.* meets *The Nightmare*

Before Christmas inside a retro Japanese game" and centers on two outcasts who fight for survival on their way to the ice cream shop! Inspired by 8-bit videogame culture, Japanese comic books, and classic stop-motion legends such as Ray Harryhausen and Art Clokey, Strange shot his film using a Canon 300D camera, did his 3D modeling, animation and rendering in Cinema 4D 9.1 and used After Effects 6.5 Pro for compositing and Final Cut Pro 5.

"For the past two or three years, I've been working 12 to 15 hour days," says Strange. "I put all my money and resources toward my gear and cut everything else out of my life. For me, getting into Sundance was a big deal, because I admire the whole indie philosophy and I like challenges. It's exciting that people—just five or six dudes working in a garage—can have a voice, and share their visions with the world."

Sundance is also a first-time experience for well-respected New York animator Aaron Augenblick, who has delivered some amazing work for Comedy Central's *Shorties Watchin' Shorties* and MTV2's *Wonder Showzen* series. His festival entry is *Golden Age*, a terrific mix-media riff on those *Hollywood Babylon* tales and *Behind the Music*-type shows, which follows the sordid lives of some famous fallen classic cartoon heroes.

"We originally pitched it to Comedy Central, but we had the bad luck of going to them at the same time when *Drawn Together* was greenlit!" says Augenblick. "But then, they came back to us and asked us whether we wanted to create the show for their Motherlode website, so we saw it as a series of two-minute shorts."

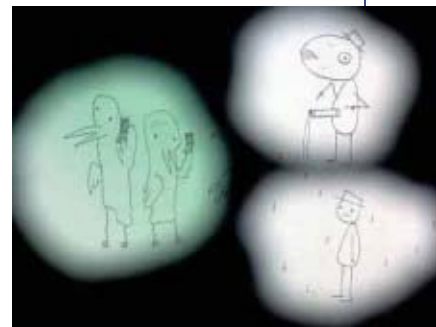
It took the team at Augenblick Studios about six months to create the series. Although the animation is mostly Flash-based, the team used a mixed bag of tricks—from straight animation to photo manipulation, live-action, phoney merchandising samples, etc—to chart the highs and lows of their toon idols! "We looked at all kinds of class shorts from the infancy of animation, to '70s era Hanna-Barbera series to anime favorites for inspiration," says Augenblick. "We even scrutinized the film stocks to create close approximations of the originals."

Also sharing the Sundance spotlight this year is Stacey Steers, a more experimental animator whose work *Phantom Canyon* uses 4,000 hand-made 6 x 8 collages. "Technically, it's very simple," says Steers who also teaches animation at the University of Colorado. "I



We Are the Strange

Xeroxed the elements and did some drawings, and I used a lot of clip art books and incorporated elements of 18th and 19th century engravings."



Everything Will Be OK



Golden Age

Described as a personal journey and based on Steers' first marriage



Phantom Canyon

and experiences in Latin America, the 10-minute short is about a woman who meets enormous insets and an alluring man with bat wings in a surreal landscape. "I have never been a cel animator, and I came upon this method of using old engraved images and clip art as I was trying to escape the tyranny of my own drawing style."

Steers agrees Sundance seems to have a renewed interest in animation this year. "It was very interesting to see the titles they selected this year ... They definitely seem to have picked material that is not very conventional." ■

For more info about the festival and to view some of the shorts available for online viewing, visit www.sundance.org

Sundance Titles:

Ask the Insects (Steve Reinke)

Chicago 10 (Brett Morgan)

Destiny Manifesto (Martha Colburn)

Dreams and Desires—Family Ties (Joanna Quinn)

Duct Tape and Cover (Yong-Jin Park)

Everything Will Be OK (Don Hertzfeldt)

Golden Age (Aaron Augenblick)

How She Slept at Night (Lilli Carre)

In Passing (Christopher Thomas Allen, Robert Rainbow)

One Rat Short (Alex Weil)

Paulina Hollers (Brent Green)

Phantom Canyon (Stacey Steers)

The Tragic Story of Nling (Jeffrey St. Jules)

T.O.M. (Tom Brown, Daniel Gray)

We Are the Strange (M dot Strange)

Year of the Fish (David Kaplan)

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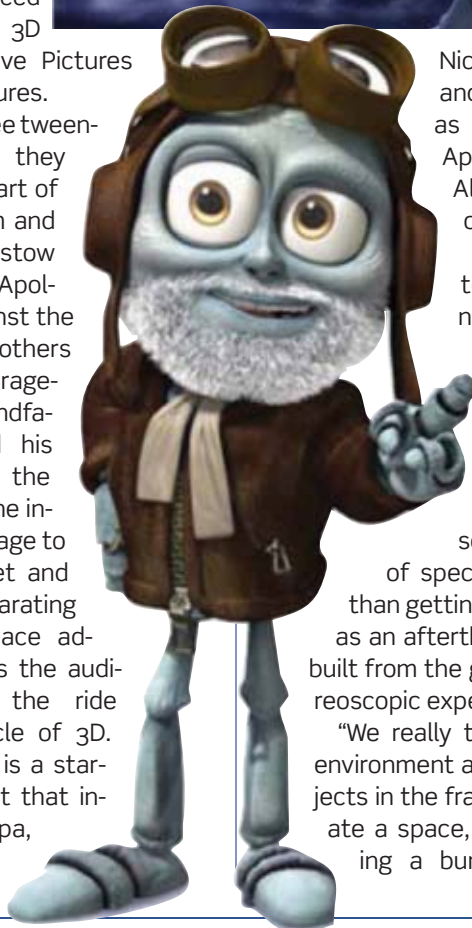
Bugs in Space!

Upcoming 3D toon *Fly Me to the Moon* Generates Some Early Buzz. **by Ryan Ball**



We've all seen the grainy, black-and-white footage of Neil Armstrong step down from the lunar landing and become the first human being to set foot on the moon. But surely he wasn't alone in this achievement. There had to have been some pioneering microorganisms along for the ride, or perhaps even a fly or two? That's the basic idea behind *Fly Me to the Moon*, a G-rated, CG-animated independent feature film produced for stereoscopic 3D exhibition by nWave Pictures and Illuminata Pictures.

In the movie, three tween-aged flies decide they want to become part of the space program and hatch a plan to stow away on the 1969 Apollo 11 mission. Against the wishes of their mothers and with encouragement from a grandfather who missed his shot at becoming the first fly in space, the intrepid insects manage to get into the rocket and embark on an exhilarating and harrowing space adventure that takes the audience along for the ride through the miracle of 3D. Adding to the fun is a star-studded voice cast that includes Kelly Ripa, Christopher Lloyd,



Nicollette Sheridan and Adrienne Barbeau, as well as real-life Apollo astronaut Buzz Aldrin in a special cameo role.

The film's director, Ben Stassen of nWave Pictures, tells us *Fly Me to the Moon* is different from a lot of animated features that have popped off the screen with the aid of special glasses. Rather than getting the 3D treatment as an afterthought, his pic was built from the ground up as a stereoscopic experience.

"We really tried to create the environment and position the objects in the frame so that we create a space, rather than creating a bunch of stuff that

comes out at you," Stassen comments. "If you approach it that way, you really see that 3D is a different language of cinema and it opens the door to great new possibilities."

Stassen and Brussels-based nWave Pictures have been producing 3D films for more than a decade, creat-

ing specialty titles such as *3D Mania*, *Alien Adventure*, *Misadventures in 3D* and *Wild Safari* for IMAX theaters and theme-park attractions. To tackle their first animated feature for the mass market, they augmented their core group of animators in Belgium with hires from throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada. And while they were able to produce the film independently, they are currently seeking a distribution partner to help them get the family film into however many theaters are equipped for 3D projection by this spring.

"The balance is shifting," notes Stassen. "Before the summer, we showed it to two big studios and they said, 'great, but no way will we accept to release this in 3D only.' But now they're coming to us because [3D] is taking off."

We'll have more behind-the-scenes insight for you closer to the film's release date, but until then you can learn more about the film by going to www.flymetothemoonthemovie.com. ■

This Month's Hot Discs

Heat up those chilly winter nights with Nick's super sponge and amazing Airbender, Sony's CG-animated wild cards and Marvel's classic superheroes.

by Claire Webb

SpongeBob SquarePants: Season 4, Volume 2 [Paramount, \$39.99]

Stephen Hillenburg's lovable yellow seafaring sponge returns this month with the second half of season four. SpongeBob SquarePants, his trusty starfish confidant, Patrick, and friends deliver new laughs direct from the underwater town of Bikini Bottom. Since its inception in 1999 on Nickelodeon, *SpongeBob* has been a pop culture icon as the top-rated series follows the nautical adventures and unusual problem solving ways of an upbeat and earnest sponge. This two-disc box set includes more hilarious adventures in 20 episodes from season four (2005-2006) as well as ten brand spanking new to DVD episodes. But that's not all from the Krusty Krab gang; you also get sidesplitting bonus footage and a handful of shorts and a music

video inspired by best-selling CD "The Best Day Ever." And if that isn't enough to satisfy your need for sponge, they also threw in a behind-the-scenes featurette with SpongeBob and host Pick Boy. You can really soak in the underwater fun with this latest installment of the now-iconic series.

[Release Date: Jan. 9]

Marvel Animated Features Gift Set [Lions Gate, \$59.99]

Kill three birds with one stone by purchasing this three-disc set of action-packed Marvel Features from the folks who brought you recent releases of titles like *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*. This gift set includes three movies: *Ultimate Avengers*, *Ultimate Avengers 2* and *The Invincible Iron*



Man. (Iron Man is also released individually on the same day, but who wouldn't want to have the

whole set of comic-book heroes?) *The Ultimate Avengers* movies, set on Earth circa 1945, feature an all-star cast of superheroes who have banded together to save humans from total destruction. Captain America, who was resurrected from the icy North Atlantic waters, joins the team consisting of Iron Man, Thor, Wasp, The Hulk and Giant Man who work together to secure justice amid chaos. These two adventures are packaged with the new *Iron Man*, directed by Frank Paur (*Spawn*, *Gargoyles*, *X-Men: Evolution* series), which chronicles the superhero's fascinating origins. We learn how billionaire-inventor Tony Stark unleashes a centuries-old destructive force that he himself must combat by becoming his greatest invention to date—Iron Man. All of these are wrapped up in the Marvel gift set for your purchasing convenience complete with a drool-worthy Iron Man toy.

[Release Date: Jan. 23]

Avatar The Last Airbender: Book 2 Earth, Vol. 1 [Paramount, \$16.99]

The beautifully drawn tale of Ang, the amazing 12-year-old Avatar who must bring peace to conflicting people of Fire Nation, Water Tribes, Earth Kingdom and Air Nomads, has certainly struck a chord with Nick viewers. This new DVD kicks off the second cycle of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* with five new episodes that pick up where *Book 1 Water* left off. (The *Complete Book 1* DVD was released last month, in case you have some catching up to do.) Nickelodeon's clever mix of Western-style



animation with Japanese anime delivers kick-butt martial arts along with child friendly humor from co-creators Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko. Special features include an original uncut animatic of the season's premiere

episode "The Avatar State" as well as a limited edition *Avatar* comic book inside specially marked copies. What a way to start the year!

[Release Date: Jan. 23]

Open Season: Special Edition [Sony, \$28.95]

If you missed Sony's CG take on the difference between domesticated and wild animals when facing survival in the trigger-happy wilderness, have no fear. It's out on DVD in both full-screen and letterbox formats. Directed by animation pros Roger Allers (*The Lion King*) and Jill Culton (*Monsters Inc.*), this September release followed a trail of mediocre talking-animal features at the box office, but it found its own audience both stateside and overseas. The story is centered on a cultivated grizzly bear, Boog, who finds himself faced with the daunting task of navigating the wild after getting shipped off and stuck with chatty mule deer Elliot. His situation is made even more complicated by the fact that hunting season is rapidly approaching and the mullet-sporting hunter Shaw is on the prowl. The odd couple must quickly form a friendship and band together with a menagerie of animals to escape the pitfalls of open season. Performances are made unique with voices like comedian Martin Lawrence, Ashton Kutcher, Billy Connolly and Gary Sinise. This pleasant maiden voyage for the folks at Sony Pictures Animation studio certainly proves to be wild at heart.

[Release Date: Jan. 30] ■



Killer Hairdo

Gonzo, FUNimation and Spike TV carve out a new mythology with *Afro Samurai*. by Ryan Ball

While its title may induce a giggle, Spike TV's new five-part animated series, *Afro Samurai*, will also inspire awe with its beautifully drawn and animated visuals and its generous offering of breath-taking action sequences. Based on the forthcoming Manga by Takashi Okazaki, this ultra-violent slice of anime plays like the bastard son of Akira Kurosawa and Sergio Leone, with more than a bit of Katsuhiro Ôtomo (*Akira*) and Quentin Tarantino thrown in for good measure.

In addition to serving as an exec producer on the series, Actor Samuel L. Jackson lends his voice to the title role. *Afro Samurai* is a strong, silent type who can cut down a small army of enemies before his hand-rolled cigarette can even ash. He wields an unusually long blade and wears a special headband he inherited from his father. The headband is one of several imbued with special powers and there are those who will stop at nothing to claim it. This makes things complicated for Afro as he tracks down a man named Justice (Ron Perlman), a lightning-quick gun-fighter who killed his father in a duel. Joining Afro on his quest is Ninja Ninja (also voiced by Jackson), a free-wheeling miscreant who does enough talking for the both of them, and Okiku (Kelly Hu), a gentle beauty trained in the healing arts.

"Hip-hop, New Jack Swing, Soul and other music genres of African-American culture have fascinated me ever since I was a teenager," Okazaki tells us. "My encounter with the afro hairdo through watching *Soul Train* from the '70s on TV really blew me away and got me started doodling African-American guys with Afro hair on everything I could get my hands on—Kleenex boxes and everything. Then, I guess, some

motifs and elements of samurai movies, which were also my favorite genre, got thrown into this figure to eventually create this concept of *Afro Samurai*."

Afro Samurai is produced by prolific Japanese animation studio Gonzo, in association/partnership with GHK K.K. and FUNimation Ent., which is servicing the merchandising, licensing and home video distribution for the series.

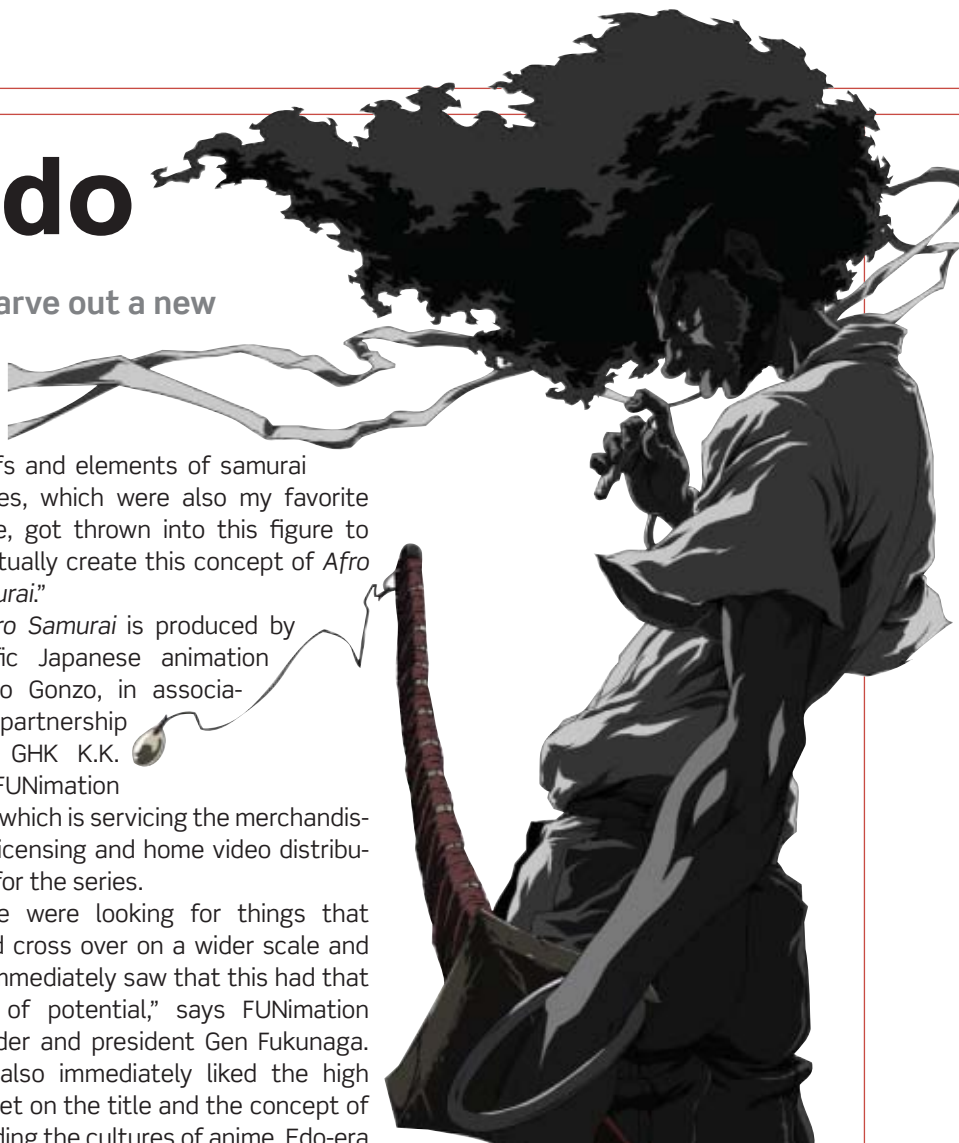
"We were looking for things that could cross over on a wider scale and we immediately saw that this had that kind of potential," says FUNimation founder and president Gen Fukunaga. "We also immediately liked the high budget on the title and the concept of blending the cultures of anime, Edo-era Japan and hip-hop."

The music in *Afro Samurai* is composed by Wu-tang Clan front man RZA, who also wrote music for Tarantino's *Kill Bill* saga. "The music is one of the things we're most proud of about the series," says Eric Calderon, VP of creative affairs working out of Gonzo's Los Angeles office. "This is the first time that a truly famous American hip-hop producer has joined in on an anime project." Calderon notes that early on Okazaki gave RZA a five-CD sampler of music he likes and quickly learned that RZA already had all those songs in his collection. "They were just so creatively aligned."

At about \$1 million per episode, the budget for the series allows Gonzo to go all-out with the animation. "Our goal with *Afro* was always to make a big event out of the show," Calderon comments. "It's not the kind of show that lends itself to experimenting with new

technology—it's more of a show that you just have to do really, really well."

Calderon says one of their goals was to make a high-impact, quick-moving and fun series, which meant avoiding something he refers to as the "Ja-pan," where the camera pans slowly during a lengthy dialogue scene. "Oh no, here comes another four-and-a-half-minute speech, watching the back of someone's head," he laments. The first episode of *Afro Samurai* is one cool fight se-



Takashi Okazaki



Gen Fukunaga



Eric Calderon

Real World: Director Fuminori Kizaki's hyper-realistic style emphasizes over-defined, super-chiseled features of the animated characters in *Afro Samurai*.



quence after another, which adds up to a high cel count, as well as a high body count. "There are a lot of scene cuts and a lot of choreography to work on, so it's pretty complex."

Mostly hand-drawn, the show uses CG very sparingly, mostly for scenes with bizarre settings. Backgrounds with conventional landscapes or towns are done in watercolor, while things like mystic temples are modeled in 3D to give them an other-worldly quality. Another example of CG usage can be found in a scene in which a statue is split in half and topples to the ground. For things like this, it's easier for the crew to work with a three-dimensional object.

Many of the crew members who worked on Fuji Television's and Warner Bros.' feature film, *Brave Story*, moved on to animate the adventures of Afro, so they were well prepared to meet the challenges of the demanding production. Each half-hour episode takes an average of six months to produce and requires the animators to work with extreme camera angles and highly detailed characters designed by animation director Hiroya Iijima.

"There are two or three schools of



anime design," Calderon notes. "A lot of people think of the really minimalistic stuff, but anime also has a whole super-realistic genre, and there's also a hyper-realistic genre, which directors like [Yoshiaki] Kawajiri, Ôtomo and our director, Fuminori Kizaki, are really good at. Characters are really, really over-defined and have super-chiseled features. It's a stylistic choice."

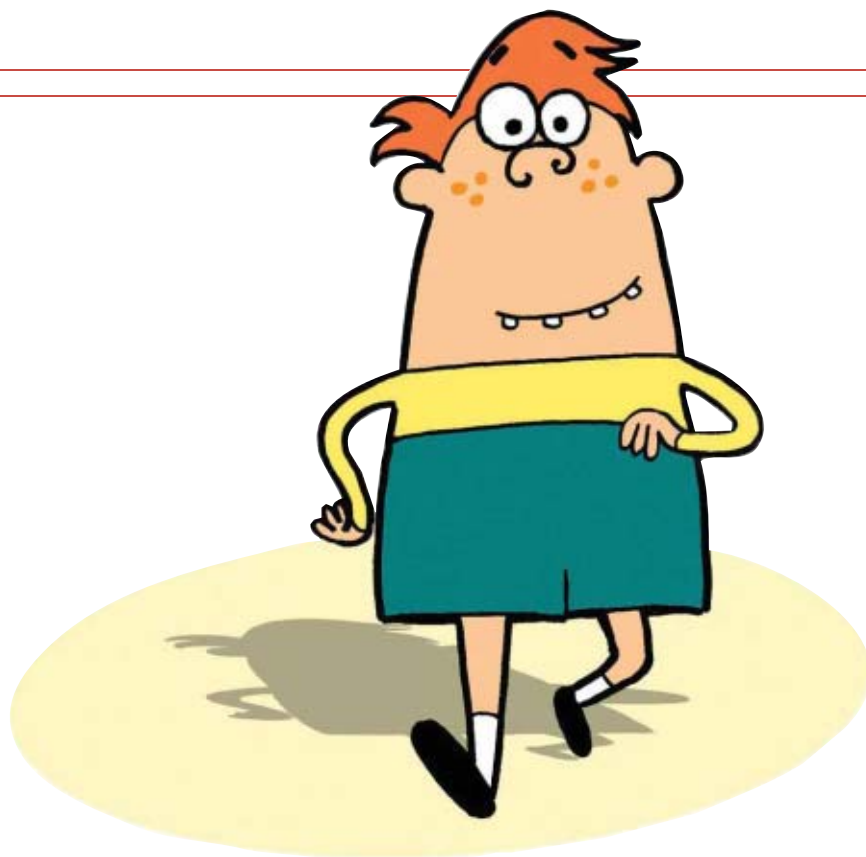
One thing people think of when it comes to anime is bloodshed, and *Afro Samurai* has more than its share of it. Heads are split open, blood sprays from decapitated corpses and limbs are severed left and right. And this isn't even the unrated version that will be released on DVD. "What I was most shocked by," Calderon says, "was that in the American standards and practices world, violence never seems to be a

problem. You can have kids murdering kids and you can have heads chopped off and blood filling the screen, but there's no cleavage and no buttocks. [Spike TV] loved the violence. They asked for more."

Animation producer Nobutaka Kasama and series producer Taito Okiura insist that limiting the on-screen violence would only water down the series' main theme, which is the futility of the chain of vengeance. "I personally see danger in concealing the reality of violence by smoke screening its essence," says Kasama. "The latter half of the series reveals the brutal reality of the path of revenge that the protagonist chooses."

Takashi Okazaki's *Afro Samurai* Manga will be a 300-page, 10-issue epic that will offer different storylines than those found in the animated series. As he works to complete the ambitious graphic novel saga, he, like the rest of us, will be watching his creation come to life on Spike TV. ■

Afro Samurai premieres Thursday, January 4th at 11 p.m. on Spike TV. FUNimation releases the DVD in stores on May 22.



He's No Danny Bonaduce!

David Fine and Alison Snowden's new animated show *Ricky Sprocket—Showbiz Boy* centers on a Hollywood first— a child actor who is also a normal, well-adjusted kid!

by Ramin Zahed

In the real world, child stars have a tendency to be either creepy, spoiled or just plain tragic. But in the new animated series from husband-and-wife animation team David Fine and Alison Snowden, a boy can be a famous Hollywood star and not lose his good heart, modesty, nor grasp of reality.

The couple who created the 1993 Oscar-winning short *Bob's Birthday* and the TV series it inspired—*Bob and Margaret* (1998-2001)—are hard at work in Vancouver this year on their new toon called *Ricky Sprocket—Showbiz Boy*. Slated for a fall 2007 debut on Nickelodeon and Teletoon, the show is currently in production at the happening quarters of Studio B. Not only is the show hoping to grab the attention of tweens who'd like to be famous and popu-

lar, it will also offer a great opportunity to poke fun at the excesses and madnasses of Hollywood.

"We went from making short films to doing *Bob and Margaret* 13 episodes at a time to *Ricky Sprocket*, which meant figuring out how to tell 52 stories in one production

run," says Fine during a phone interview from his new home in Vancouver. "It was daunting, and finding the right writers to work with was quite a task. We went through hundreds of writing samples to find the right team. That was a big chal-

lenge at first."

Fine and Snowden both express their pleasure about their relationship with the team at Studio B, the toon shop behind hits such as *Being Ian*, *Class of the Titans*, *The Amazing Adrenalini Brothers* and the upcoming *George of the Jungle* series. "We are just now seeing the first animation coming in, the scenes that were done in house at Studio B, and they are fantastic," says Fine. "We have a great director in Josh Mepham, and everyone has been so supportive of our vision while also contributing to it so effectively."

"We're really excited about the look of the show and the animation is really incredible to see after living with the characters for so long as inanimate designs," adds Snowden who is famous for the very memorable look of her characters (see *Bob and Margaret!*).

The project was originally brought to Studio B by Tatiana Kober and her team at financing, distribution and production outfit Bejuba! Entertainment. Studio B co-founder and partner Blair Peters, a fan of Fine and Snowden, instantly warmed to the show's premise.

"What I liked about the show is that Ricky is a troublemaker and he still gets into mischief like any 10- or 11-year-old boy," explains Peters. "He's not perfect and he doesn't use the fact that he's got money or fame to influence people. He has parents who are quite obtuse—his dad works in a sausage factory and his mom wears these awful pants ... they have no interest in Ricky's show biz conundrums."

Peters says the show has had one of

"What I liked about the show is that Ricky is a troublemaker ... he's not perfect and doesn't use the fact that he's got money or fame to influence people."

—Blair Peters, Studio B co-founder and *Ricky Sprocket* exec producer

the smoothest development-to-production processes he has seen. "We had our first kick-off meeting with Teletoon and Nick early in 2006. We had planned to do a show called *Simon Stimple* with David and Alison, but that didn't work out, so



Blair Peters

Ricky creators David Fine and Alison Snowden at work with director Josh Mepham



when they came to us with *Ricky*, we were thrilled, because comedy is our genre. We hired veteran New York-based writer Russell Marcus (*Married with Children*, *Brandy & Mr. Whiskers*) as story editor, and we were on a roll."

Both Peters and Fine see the wish fulfillment aspects of the show as a big draw for young viewers. "What kid wouldn't want to act in an action-adventure movie or to be able to bring his buddies to his movie sets," adds Peters. "You can look at it as a kind of *Entourage* for the younger set!"

Because the bulk of the animation is done in house at Studio B—with additional work done in the Philippines by Wayne Dearing's talented crew at Top Draw Animation, the creators have a lot of control over what the final product will look like. "The show has a definite David-and-Alison look, but it's a lot crisper and snappier than *Bob and Margaret*," notes Peters.

Peters, who also wrote an episode of the show in which Ricky's sister becomes more popular than he is, says many of the episodes are split evenly between the boy's adventures at home and at the studio. "There's an episode in which he has to kiss his co-star Kitten Kaboodle, for example. He has never kissed a girl before, but now he has to do it in front of the whole crew. In a sense, everything in his life is bigger and more magnified than the other kids."

Fine and Snowden also find this larger-than-life aspect of Ricky's world quite amusing. To create the show, they set out to do some research by watching documentaries about the lives of real Hollywood child actors. "We quickly realized that we really didn't want to base the show on any of the real young stars, because their lives were quite troubled and

Monkey See



their parents weren't really nice in many cases," admits Snowden. "But we did visit Los Angeles many times to get some first-hand impressions of the studios and life out there!"

Peters says he's quite proud of some of the pre-digital aspects of the production pipeline. "Although we rely on Flash technology, all the layouts are still being done in blue pencil. Old-school layout people are designing the shots, and we believe that makes a difference. Layout is one of the last times you can tweak an angle or a shot. The whole process is digital except that little step. It's great to visit the studio and watch the interaction between the people in different departments, the director talking to the layout people and the

board guy—and everyone jamming ideas."

Since Fine and Snowden are proud of the way their latest creation has taken flight, we have to ask them to share their secrets for a successful animation career. "Come up with strong, original ideas with narrative that captures people's attention and make short films to get them on the screen," notes Fine. "People really respond to seeing your vision realized. At the same time, broadcasters also like to be involved in the development. So on one hand, come up with strong ideas, but on the other hand, be flexible and open to input. I guess it's a fine line." ■

Ricky Sprocket—Showbiz Boy is scheduled to debut on Nickelodeon worldwide in the fall of 2007.

What Happens in Vegas...

Industry consolidation may have resulted in a drop in the number of animation players at the annual NATPE confab in Las Vegas, but there are still plenty of reasons why industry pros take their toons to this top market.

TELEVISION

Nothing reminds TV execs that a whole new year has kicked into high gear more than the NATPE TV confab in Las Vegas. Held at the Mandalay Bay resort January 15-18 this year, the event continues to attract the usual mix of small-screen buyers, sellers and new media pioneers. Despite facing tough competition from an ever-growing number of TV and animation events around the world, the market continues to attract a solid list of important animation professionals and heavyweight producers, buyers and distributors.

"NATPE is integral to our business in two notable ways," says Sander Schwartz, president of Warner Bros. Animation. "First it provides a solid forum for us to meet with international buyers—particularly from Latin America—and present our slate of shows. NATPE also affords us an opportunity to see new shows from other domestic and international producers."

Schwartz adds, "We're in the midst of an amazing revolution in media distribution, providing the consumer with new choices and more convenience in how they receive our shows. It's important to be at the forefront of digital distribution—and then wholeheartedly embrace it."

Warner Bros. Animation will be greeting the new year with a slate of shows which offers new twists on familiar themes and characters. "From Bugs Bunny and Scooby-Doo to Superman and Tom & Jerry, we've found great success in re-casting characters from the revered animation libraries of Warner Bros., Hanna-Barbera and DC Comics in new and exciting directions," says Schwartz. "In addition to our domestic TV slate, we'll introduce an exciting new line of feature-length productions for male teen and 'tweens in 2007 with the debut of the DC Universe direct-to-video releases."

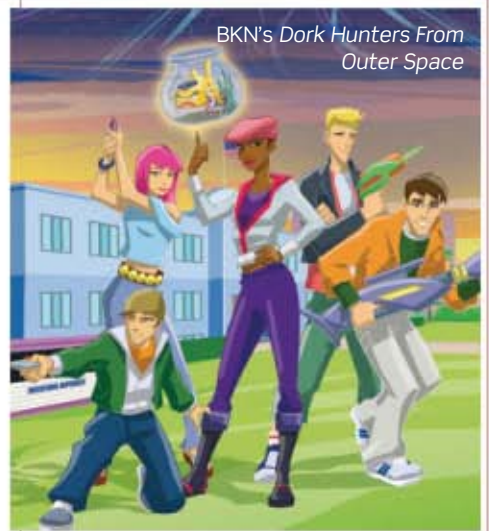
The market also continues to be an important strategic stop for Kevin Gillis, exec producer and managing partner at Breakthrough Animation. "As the first market of the year, we always have new creative material to present at NATPE," says Gillis. "We find there's a clear-slate mentality from the buyers that encourages content providers with an excellent opportunity to discuss fresh concepts from the first sprout."

Among the shows Breakthrough is bringing to the market is a new slate of adult-oriented toons such as *The Orphanage*, *Femme Fatale* and *Buddy's*. In addition, the company is unveiling a new season of its popular *Atomic Betty* series, in which the lead character finds herself facing challenges and alien species back on planet Earth.

"Our new focus toward adult content is a direct result of the new platform and changing audience tastes that are seeping the TV and new media horizons," adds Gillis.

This new horizon is also opening doors for Scott Dyer, exec VP and general manager at Canadian powerhouse Corus Kids which also includes Nelvana Studios in Toronto. "There is a strong interest in multi-platform," notes Dyer. "There is also an increasing niche focus, as you see some channels oriented more towards boys or girls programming. Global networks like Nick, Disney and Cartoon Network are gaining steam."

Nelvana will be bringing a very healthy mix of 2D digital, 2D traditional and CG shows to the market. "I

Nelvana's *Ruby Gloom*BKN's *Dork Hunters From Outer Space*Breakthrough Animation's *The Orphanage*

continue to be impressed with our own animation team's work on our new series *Ruby Gloom*," he adds. "It has a very compelling visual design and is well worth a look. I also like Nerd Corps' *Storm Hawks* for its great look and storyline."

Familiar Faces in New Formats

One of the new shows which is bound to attract a lot of attention worldwide is *The Adventures of Bert and Ernie*, from the folks at Sesame Workshop. The 26x5 series features claymation versions of the famous Sesame Street duo as they reminisce about their adventures and travels—with contrasting stories and points of view, of course! "For the first time, we are producing Sesame Street-branded animation," says Celia Schneiderman, manager of international TV distribution at Sesame Workshop. "In addition,

we're in development with *Twiddlebugs*, colorful little characters that live in Bert and Ernie's plant box—they have unique perspectives on life and are able to solve problems in unconventional ways—the series is formatted at three-minute episodes and we're looking for co-production partners."

Schneiderman also believes that 2007 will be quite an interesting time for animation. "The industry has progressed through a fascinating transition, and kids' animation now fully incorporates a wide variety of media including 2D, stop-motion, CGI, Flash, etc. The programs tell compelling stories and encompass rich character personalities. Even more, content has become more global with programming produced in Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe and the U.S. broadcasting all over the world."

Allen Bohbot, chairman and CEO of BKN has a slightly different take on the climate. "It seems that each year, there are few less participants on the production side," says Bohbot. "The industry appears to be consolidating, creating more opportunities for established production and distribution companies."

Among BKN's big draws at NATPE are two new animated series which have already created buzz in 2006. "We are taking out two new shows this year rather than our traditional approach of introducing one new series with each new year," he says. "*Zorro: Generation Z* is targeted to more of a male audience, while *Dork Hunters From Outer Space* comfortably crosses into both the male and female demographic and is our first entry in quite some time that could be considered a pure comedy. They are both superb pro-

grams which have raised the bar on both action and comedy genres."

DIC Entertainment will make a strong showing at the market with fresh titles such as *Horseland*, KOL's *Secret Slumber Party* and the CG-animated KidToon matinee film, *Strawberry Shortcake Sweet Dreams*. "We relaunched Strawberry Shortcake in 2002 and in the U.S. domestic market, her popularity never wanes," says Leslie Nelson, DIC's senior VP of international sales and managing director of European operations. "In the international markets, we have an extremely strong programs in France and solid brand-building in Italy, Germany, U.K., Latin America and the Nordic region. We've sold the Strawberry Shortcake animated specials and CGI feature throughout Southeast Asia as well."

Nelson also believes that NATPE continues to be one of the key events for animation professionals, especially those wanting to do business in Latin American territories. "NATPE is still extremely important to DIC's distribution business, especially in Latin America," she points out. "Our international broadcast partners are constantly seeking quality animation to fuel their kids' schedules and NATPE continues to be a viable market for DIC to introduce new animation. The race for the next biggest hit starts at NATPE." ■

For more info, visit www.natpe.org



Sander Schwartz



Scott Dyer



Kevin Gillis



Allen Bohbot



Leslie Nelson



Celia Schneiderman



Sesame Workshop's *The Adventures of Bert and Ernie*



DIC's *Strawberry Shortcake Sweet Dreams*



Warner Bros.' *Tom and Jerry Tales*

Best Bets at NATPE



Eastern Legacy: Vancouver-based Mainframe Entertainment and Singapore's Infinite Frameworks have teamed up to produce the new 26x22 CG-animated series *Ghost Hunter Dax*. The show centers on a Chinese-American boy who learns about his heritage and ghost-hunting skills when he moves to Shanghai.

Dark Helmet Strikes

Back: Penned by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan, MGM's new animated series *Spaceballs* offers hilarious spoofs of pop culture favorites such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars* and *The Pirates of the Caribbean* movies.



Bushy-Tailed: Decode Entertainment's *Urban Vermin* is a 26x22 CG toon about Ken and Abe, two garbage-loving raccoon brothers and their never-ending turf wars.



Boy vs. Girl: BRB's top-rated *Angus & Cheryl* is a 104x90-second high-def series which explores the never-ending battle between the sexes. Produced by BRB, Screen 21 and Tuba Entertainment, the series was one of the most-watched offerings at last year's MIPCOM Junior market.



Cool School: Nelvana's new 2D toon *Wayside* is based on Louis Sachar's best-selling book about a quirky grammar school where cows roam free, class elections are decided by dodge ball games and falling asleep is encourage in classrooms. Michael Cera and Kathy Najimy are part of the voice cast.

Good and Green:

The caped cucumber continues his crusade to defend decency and guard goodness *The Adventures of LarryBoy*, produced by Big Idea (*Veggie Tales*) and distributed by Classic Media.



ANIMATION
MAGAZINE'S

SCHOOL GUIDE

This year insiders are predicting the current boom in make-your-own content to continue to influence the entertainment industry. Perhaps more than any time in recent history, content providers are able to offer their projects to the public without the approval of old-school gatekeepers. Nevertheless, the role of education providers is as crucial as ever before. The explosion in the number of animation and vfx programs in the U.S. and abroad has led to more festival-friendly projects. We've put together this comprehensive guide to help our readers track down the program and educational institution that

best match their financial and academic goals. Just remember these perennial words of advice: Stick to the essential basics of drawing and animation. Then, learn the technical tools necessary to survive in a competitive market. The information found in this guide is regularly updated on the magazine's website at www.animationmagazine.net/schools.html.



Institute of Art students



Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Hazen & Mr. Horlocker



Le Building



Robot Ate My Homework



The Possum

Le Building by Marco Nguyen, Pierre Perifel, Xavier Ramonede, Olivier Staphylas and Remi Zaarour (Ecole Gobelins, Paris, France)
Mr. Schwartz, Mr. Hazen & Mr. Horlocker by Stefan Mueller (Wiesbaden University of Applied Sciences, Germany)
Robot Ate My Homework by Mark Shirra (Vancouver Film School)
The Possum by Chris Choy (California Institute of the Arts)

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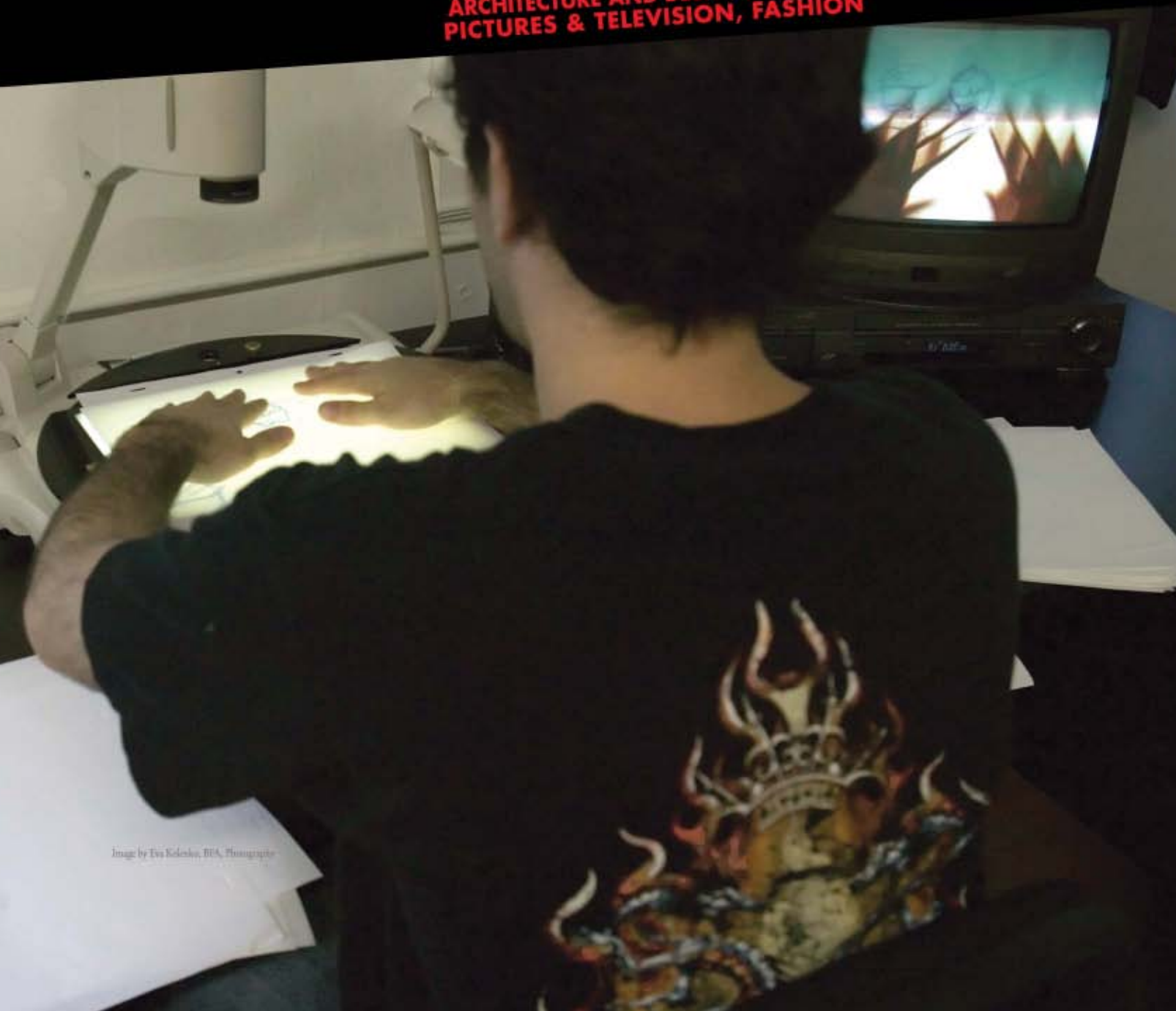


Image by Eva Kolesova, BFA, Photography

Pelota



Thom Roberts

Insider Tips

Some of today's top pros share their insights on getting the right animation education.

by Ellen Wolff

DreamWorks animator Cameron Hood couldn't have predicted the circumstances surrounding the return to his alma mater, Toronto's Sheridan College. But when the school invited DreamWorks Animation chief Jeffrey Katzenberg to address Sheridan's students, Hood joined him onstage. This trip came a year before the debut of *First Flight*, the 2006 CG short which Hood co-directed with DreamWorks animator Kyle Jefferson, so Hood couldn't share *that* story. But he did tell students how his three years at Sheridan influenced his career. "It was a unique opportunity to explain what it was like going from school to work."

Most computer animation pros probably can't revisit their colleges, but several did volunteer perspectives on their schooling—including Hood's co-director Kyle Jefferson, who joined Dreamworks after taking Sheridan's compressed curriculum. Also reflecting on his intensive animation training was Rhythm & Hues' Thom Roberts, (*Happy Feet*) who attended the Vancouver Film School in 2002-3.

Other pros offered insights about four-year BFA programs, including Tippet Studio's Ryan Hood, (*Charlotte's Web*) who got his degree in 2001 at San Francisco's Academy of Art University. Blur Studio's Jeff Fowler earned his degree at Ringling in Florida in 2002—an education that prepared him to create

the Oscar-nominated short *Gopher Broke* just two years after graduation. Cal Arts '05 alum Joshua Look spoke of how L.A.'s acclaimed art college readied him to work at Nickelodeon and on Laika Studios' upcoming feature, *Jack & Ben*. Finally, underscoring the adage 'The more you learn, the more you earn,' Gil Kenan recounted how his '02 MFA efforts at UCLA's Animation Workshop led directly to his 2006 directorial debut, Sony's *Monster House*.

The Fundamentals

Clearly, educational choices are

plentiful these days, especially when you add online options like AnimationMentor.com. So direct comparisons are difficult—in terms of both cost and coursework. But one point on which the pros agree is the importance of foundational art courses.

Figure drawing classes top the list. A.A.U. alum Ryan Hood observes, "They helped my understanding of the human form. Strong, clear poses are important in animation, and figure drawing helps strengthen those poses." Kyle Jefferson concurs. "What I got from Sheridan was classical training in

Charlotte's Web



Ryan Hood

Monkey Pit



Jeff Fowler

successful teachers I had at Sheridan were *working* teachers. The classes Cam and I teach use real world experiences that are never more than a couple of months old."

More nebulous to assess is the influence of fellow students, which can be substantial (and relies on lucky timing). For example, while CalArts' faculty is widely lauded, Joshua Look extols the value of collaborative students. "Every person—except the foolish few—goes to their neighbors for feedback. When you show fellow students your work you get new perspectives, even if you don't change what you've done. It prepares you to work on a team in the industry."

Thom Roberts recalls how student collaborations helped them flourish within the 24/7 environment of Vancouver's compressed curriculum. "Our instructors weren't there at 4 a.m., so we learned to

ask other students. It's very similar to production, where you can't always ask the director if something looks right."

Jeff Fowler admits, "It can be nerve-racking to put yourself out there and bounce ideas off

continued on page A6

drawing, sculpture and writing. When I got to DreamWorks I knew how to take apart a script and draw storyboards. Anyone can learn Maya but not everyone can learn to draw."

This is also true even in Ringling's noted CG program, says Jeff Fowler. "Your first year has *nothing* to do with computers; it's figure drawing, color & design and learning how to compose traditional images. That helps later when you're doing layouts, setting up a camera for a shot and having opinions about lighting."

Joshua Look reports similar experiences in CalArts' Character Animation program, likening his first year to an artistic 'boot camp.'

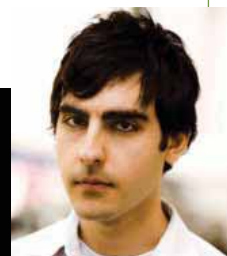
"I took maybe one CG class that year. They didn't even *require* CG classes for character animators until my senior year." This may seem surprising—considering all the CalArts Character grads who are producing computer animation at Pixar—but it highlights the enduring usefulness of foundational art courses.

The Power of Peers

The abilities of the educators teaching these courses are crucial,

but it's hard for prospective students to evaluate that unless they can query graduates. Certainly UCLA's notable alumni roster speaks volumes about its faculty's skills, but there's a half-century track record behind them. Also worth weighing is the opinion voiced by Kyle Jefferson, who with Cameron Hood has taught at L.A.'s Gnomon for five years. "The most suc-

The Lark



Gil Kenan



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First Flight



Cameron Hood
& Kyle Jefferson

School Tools

continued from page A4

people. But it's the only way to improve. If someone doesn't understand your work, you've got to be able to deal with that professionally. That's the real world." And the motivational aspects of what Fowler calls "benign competition" can't be underestimated. As Gil Kenan observes, "You need the energy that varying voices create. Seeing exciting work that's unlike yours is a real jolt. It makes you want to make better films. Almost everyone makes one stinker in school, so it's really important to put it up and see what doesn't work."

Perfecting The Pitch

Student interactions may be ephemeral, but a perennial part of animation training involves mastering 'the art of the pitch.' That's especially true where schools require students to regularly produce individual films.

Pitching your storyboards, says Kenan, "Is a 'litmus test.' Our teacher invariably asked: 'Could this be done in live action?' If you had a magical teapot in a sword-fight you'd say 'No way.' But if you had a human-based story you'd have to give reasons why it was suited for animation. Pitching is about as vulnerable as you ever get in this world, but if you can't defend your drawings that's a useful lesson."

The pitch process also dissuades fledgling animators from proposing

'epics' that outstrip their time, resources and abilities. Thom Roberts admits, "There's always the tendency to think big and be completely unrealistic." Jeff Fowler agrees. "You think you can make a five-minute film with 20 characters, but in two minutes your teacher disapproves. It's tough love!" Such critiques, however disappointing, provide preparation for the studio notes that professionals regularly receive. As Ryan Hood remarks, "That's reflected in our jobs every day when we attend dailies and hear from directors."

Showtime and Beyond

In the end, what determines students' professional opportunities is the quality of the reel they can show prospective employers. Most schools are proactive about preparing their students for festival screenings, and host career days where students meet

studio reps. CalArts holds legendary job fairs, Ringling is ever-present at SIGGRAPH and posts student films on iTunes.

The most heartening outcome is what happened when UCLA chose Gil Kenan's \$400 film *The Lark* for its Spotlight Awards. In the audience sat a CAA rep, who offered Kenan representation. Through that, Kenan got to see the *Monster House* script, and his ideas (well-drawn, of course) so impressed producers Zemeckis and Spielberg that Kenan landed the director's job. He's now working on his second feature.

Lest you think that was fluke, remember that UCLA grad Shane Acker is now turning his student film *g* into a Tim Burton-produced feature. And over at DreamWorks, Jefferson and Hood are developing a feature to co-direct.

When Cameron Hood ended his talk to Sheridan's students, he left them with advice that applies to all student animators: "This is a craft. The more time you put into it, the better you'll get. Chuck Jones said, 'There are 100,000 bad drawings in everyone. Get them out as soon as possible.' So keep drawing. Don't stop." ■

Ellen Wolff is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in visual effects, animation and education.

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Joshua Look

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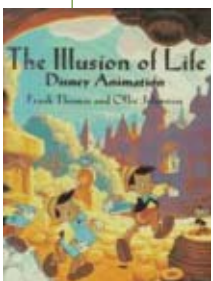
www.sheridaninstitute.ca

For program details visit: <http://visualartsdesign.sheridaninstitute.ca>

Sheridan Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, 1430 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6H 2L1

Ten Essential Books for Aspiring Animators & Fans

If you're looking to pursue a career in animation or if you're just a die-hard fan of the art form, you need to run to the library or click on amazon.com to get your hands on these ten helpful books. Please note that this list includes only general-themed handbooks which include tips for both 2D and CG animation. We offer reviews of more up-to-date CG primer guidebooks in the Tech section of the magazine.



The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas (Disney Editions, \$60). You can't really begin to consider a career in animation without first reading this inspiring, well-illustrated tome about the golden age of classic animation at Disney, written by two of the talented Nine Old Men who lived the dream.

The Animator's Survival Kit

by Richard Williams (Faber & Faber, \$30). Simple instructions about all aspects of the craft—from walk cycles and breaking joints to dialogue and voice acting—written by one of the most respected animators of the '70s era.

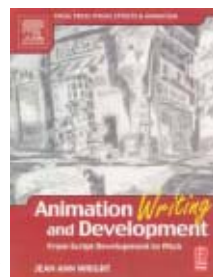


Tezuka School of Animation:

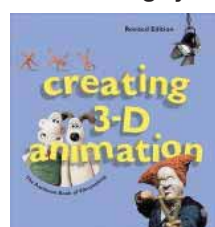
Learning the Basics by Osamu Tezuka and Jason D. Deangelis (Watson Guptill Publications, \$13.95). Fans or students of the art of shows such as *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion* will definitely eat up every page of this colorful book penned by the folks who created some of the earliest global manga/anime hits of our time.

Animation Writing and Development:

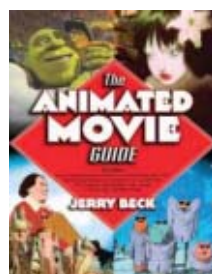
From Script Development to Pitch by Jean Ann Wright (Focal Press, \$27.95). Everything you need to know about creating original characters, developing a TV series, feature or multimedia project and writing premises, outlines and scripts.



Creating 3-D Animation: The Aardman Book of Filmmaking



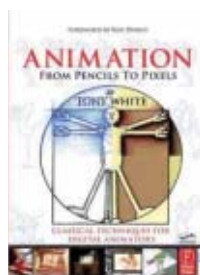
by Peter Lord and Brian Sibley (Harry N. Abrams, \$29.95). If you've ever fallen under the spell of one of the charming shorts or features by the Bristol-based stop-mo studio (*Wallace & Gromit*, *Creature Comforts* and *Chicken Run*, to name a few), then you'll have to get your hands on this brilliant primer on the art and craft of plasticine animation.



The Animated Movie Guide by Jerry Beck (Chicago Review Press, \$26.95). No book gives you more info about all the animated features released every year better than this well-researched resource penned by toon expert Beck.

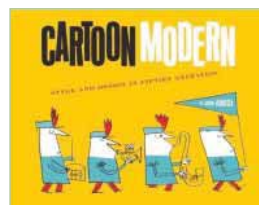
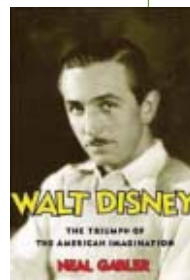
Drawing the Line: The Untold Story of the Animation Unions

from Bosko to Bart Simpson by Tom Sito. (University Press of Kentucky, \$32). Here's a fascinating book that helps you understand the history of how animation workers struggled to get fair treatment from their bosses, penned by one of the most respected animators in town and former head of the Screen Cartoonists Union.



Animation from Pencils to Pixels: Classical Techniques for the Digital Animator by Tony White. (Focal Press, \$49.95) Using his own short *Endangered Species*, the award-winning animator shows readers how to make the transition from 2D to CG in this 500-plus-page tome which also comes with a helpful CD-ROM.

Walt Disney: The Triumph of the American Imagination by Neal Gabler. (Knopf, \$35) The cinema historian delves deeply into the life of the American icon, detailing his life, beloved work and the origins of an empire which has left a lasting impact on our culture.

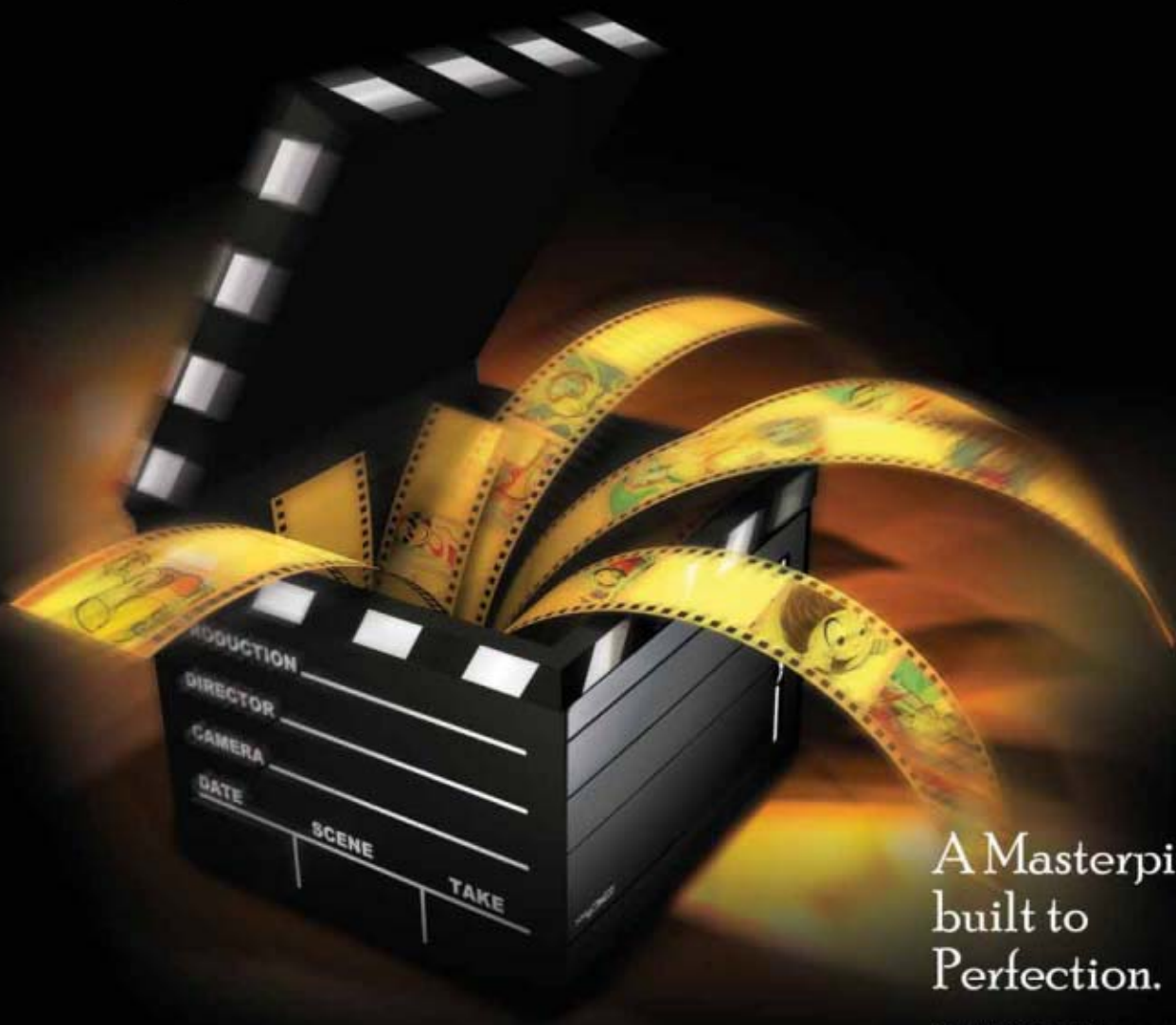


Cartoon Modern: Style and Design in 1950s Animation

by Amid Amidi. (Chronicle Books, \$40). Learn all about the techniques and talented artists who made the 50s era such an influential period in graphic arts for TV commercials, features and TV animation in this well-written and beautifully illustrated volume. ■

— Ramin Zahed

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Seven Noteworthy School Anniversaries

5 Years

Studio Arts

Founded by Eric Huelsman and Stuart Chasmer in 2002, Studio Arts offers a variety of curricula focusing on character animation, modeling, lighting, compositing vfx and graphic design. Students can get hands-on training in Autodesk Maya, Apple Shake, Adobe After Effects, PhotoShop and

Illustrator as well as Flash animation, zbrush, Rhino 3d, Mirage, SketchUp Pro

and Final Cut Pro. According to Huelsman, the reason they stay in business is "because we love anything and everything animation-oriented!" Keep up the great work!

Website: www.studioarts.tv



10 Years

Gnomon School of Visual Effects

It's hard to believe that this popular L.A. school opened its doors in October of 1997 with only one computer lab, three instructors and four classes. Gnomon now holds more than 80 classes per term in five computer labs, two art studios and two lecture rooms taught by 45 instructors who have a minimum of three years of production experience. Students can choose from an industry-driven Certificate Program, the immersive Maya Fast Track Program or take classes on an extension basis. Although Gnomon has grown from a small professional training center to become one of the top vfx/animation schools in the world, it has remained true to its initial goal: to offer the best education possible for individuals who want a career in high-end CG for entertainment.

Website: www.gnomon3d.com



ACME Animation



It's been almost a decade since Dave Master decided to create a network that would allow world-class animation pros to offer and advice, instruction and advice to high school animation students and enthusiasts. His wonderful brainchild, The ACME Network, has placed hundreds of animators working in the industry and taught thousands of visually literate aficionados of the art form. Their next project is a cross-cultural ACME Online pilot which will connect young students in the favelas of Brazil to kids in the U.S. to share their animation projects, with mentoring from animation pros in both countries.

When asked about the *raison d'être* for the program, Master says, "All young people deserve access to expertise and opportunity, regardless of where they live or how wealthy they are. We work primarily with underserved communities. Our job is to make the most widespread impact with as little as possible time and effort from the pros. It's good for the business, good for the art form, good for schools, arts education and especially great for students!" We couldn't agree more!

Website: www.acmeanimation.org

40 Years

Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Sheridan College will be popping the champagne this year to celebrate its 4th decade of operation and its growth from a 400-student college to a dynamic education center with over 14,000 full-time and 35,000 continuing ed students. Over 3,000 students are currently enrolled in the school's animation, arts and design program. Among the school's most famous graduates are Steve Williams, James Straus and Glenn McQueen. Animated Short Oscar winners Jon Minnis (*Charade*) and Eric Armstrong (*The ChubbChubbs*) also attended the acclaimed institute. To learn more about the animation program, you can contact Dr. Michael Collins, Dean of Animation, Art & Design.

Website: www1.sheridaninstitute.ca



75 Years

Ringling School of Art & Design



Regular SIGGRAPH attendees are used to enjoying the amazing CG-animated projects created by Ringling's Animation Program over the past decade. However, few realize that the school will be celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Located on Florida's Gulf Coast, the 35-acre campus includes 69 buildings, and attracts close to 1,100 students from 43 states and 28 foreign countries. It is recognized as being among the best and most innovative visual arts colleges in the United States as well as a leader in the use of technology in the arts. The school will be hosting its second Sarasota International Design Summit in November, addressing how design transforms people, places and products. In fact, Ringling's Anniversary Year slogan is "75 Years of Transforming the Visual World." Every year, we look forward to taking in the wonderful animated shorts the students of Ringling's CG animation program

deliver to the world. Here's to 75 more animated years.

Website: www.ringling.edu

150 Years

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

If we'd been giving out a prize for the biggest toon anniversary this year, Edinboro would have won it. Established in 1857, the Edinboro School of Pennsylvania and current president Dr. Frank G. Pogue, will be celebrating the higher learning establishment's 150th year of operation. According to the note they sent us, "Dozens of Edinboro grads now work in the film and animation industries as producers, directors, assistant directors, key animators, computer animators and matte artists. Grads are employed by companies such as Pixar, Blue Sky, LucasFilm, Walt Disney Studios, Nickelodeon and DreamWorks."

The Edinboro art department serves nearly 1,000 majors with some 50 faculty and the animation program is recognized as one of the country's top classical programs. Interesting factoid to note: the city of Edinboro was named by descendents of Scottish settlers from Edinburgh, Scotland. And of course, you can't go wrong with their slogan, "You can get there from here!"

Website: www.edinboro.edu



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Flash: Advanced Intensive

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As technology advances, the role of artist expands, particularly in digital imaging and design. These "new artists"—innovators who embody both aesthetic and virtual forms—work as designers, composers, and technologists in such areas as 3-D modeling, character animation, sound design, special effects, medical imaging, architectural visualization, broadcast design, and video game design. New York University's Center for Advanced Digital Applications (CADA), part of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (www.scps.nyu.edu), helps prepare students to pursue opportunities in these fields.

NYU CADA's faculty includes working animators, filmmakers, and artists, all adept at marrying theory and real world technique in their teaching. CADA's location in the heart of New York City, a center of digital activity, means students benefit in—and out of—the classroom from proximity to scores of production companies, such as RhinoFX, and Blue Sky Studios.

NYU offers several academic routes. Its M.S. in Digital Imaging and Design program emphasizes digital production tools and techniques in an applied, multidisciplinary curriculum. A view book and gallery of student work can be seen at www.scps.nyu.edu/digital.masters.

For those just wanting to explore the field or working professionals needing skills updates, NYU offers dozens of non-degree courses in animation, digital design and technology. Further, NYU has professional certificate programs in Animation, Modeling and Visual Effects Compositing.

NYU-SCPS, one of the University's 14 schools and colleges, has been for over 70 years a national leader in providing adult and professionally-driven education. Programs include non-credit courses that span more than 125 fields, 14 industry-focused Master's degree programs, nine Bachelor's and six Associate degree programs specially designed for working adults.

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70 years into its history, the uniquely American art form of animated film is enjoying a rebirth of breathtaking vitality and inventiveness, with industry centers on both coasts. When you study the discipline at SVA, you plug into the creative energies of the New York animation community. Our instructors are major industry names, and they train the next generation of talent not merely as students, but as future colleagues. This prestigious group of directors, fine artists, photographers, special effects artists, writers, character designers, advertising specialists, and computer wizards pass on more than just technical skills; you get to tap their wide experience, and they spread a contagious excitement about animation arts. You will learn to make the most of this powerful and delicate medium, whose images and stories can move people to laugh or wince or weep. The goal is to create art that transcends language, culture, politics, and economics: this is what the best animation can do. SVA gives you direct access to the newest professional-level technology, including a stop-motion studio and a digital compositing lab. You can get your hands wet studying claymation or build actual miniature sets from the ground up. Animation at SVA is about the old ways as well as the new (we still see Pinocchio and Fantasia as benchmarks), and you also get to use Bolex and Oxberry cameras, since the classics of the stop-motion genre were shot on film. But technique and gear are just tools of your imagination, which goes only as far as you're willing to take it. We encourage you to animate your dreams, put them up on a screen.



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School Guide 2007

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New York, NY
Phone: 212-967-7777 Ext. 88
Fax: 212-967-7971
E-mail: brian@3dtraining.com
Website: www.3dtraining.com
Degrees/certificates offered:
 Certificate in 3D Animation
Number of students in animation program: 10-15 per class (approximately 40 per month)
Cost of program: \$950 - \$3,700
Head of animation: Bobby Roy
Head of admissions: Brian Wilson
Time of year offered: Classes start every month year-round
Application deadline: One week before class starts
Equipment: We teach 3ds Max and Maya and use state of the art equipment in the classroom and online classes.

Academy of Art University

San Francisco, CA
Phone: 1-800-544-2787
Fax: 415-618-6287
E-mail: info@academyart.edu
Website: www.academyart.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: AA, BFA, MFA, personal enrichment
Number of students in animation program: 1,700 (approximately)
Cost of program: Undergraduate: \$600 per unit; Graduate: \$650 per unit
Head of animation:
 Undergraduate co-directors-Sherrie H. Sinclair and Chris Armstrong; Graduate-Tom Bertino
Time of year offered: Year-round on campus and online
Application deadline: Rolling
Equipment: Macs, PCs, LunchBoxSync, Video Visualizer, Green Screen, Traditional Animation tables and lightboxes (Programs: Maya, Flipbook, Animo, Flash, Z-Brush, Shake, Combustion, 3D Studio Max, Photoshop, Premiere, After Effects.)

Academy College

Bloomington, MN
Phone: 952-851-0066
Fax: 952-851-0094
E-mail: admissions@academycollege.edu
Website: www.academycollege.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: AAS and BS
Number of students in animation program: 80
Cost of program: Cost varies based upon program and transfer of credit.
Head of animation: Jacinda Miller
Head of admissions: Marvin Kimble
Time of year offered: Classes begin every six weeks.
Application Deadline: Eight Starts per year
Equipment: High-end PC computer systems, scanners and lab equipment

The Animation Academy

Burbank, CA
Phone: 818-848-6590
E-mail: info@theanimationacademy.com
Website: www.TheAnimationAcademy.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate
Cost of program: Approximately \$1,295 per year
Head of animation: Charles Zembillas
Head of admissions: George Novotny
Time of year offered: Year-round

Animation Mentor

Berkeley, CA
Phone: 510-809-1177
Fax: 510-809-1172
E-mail: General inquiry: info@animationmentor.com
 Admissions inquiry: admissions@animationmentor.com
Website: www.AnimationMentor.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate Diploma in Advanced Studies in Character Animation
Number of students in animation program: 500
Cost of program: Eighteen-month program tuition fee is \$15,800. Pay-as-you-go pricing is available, ask the admissions advisor for details.
Head of animation: Bobby Beck
Head of admissions: Becky McDonald
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: February 23,

2007 (spring term)
 May 18, 2007 (summer term)
 August 17, 2007 (fall term)
Equipment: N/A

The Art Institute of Atlanta

Atlanta, GA
Phone: 800-275-4242
Fax: 770-394-0008
E-mail: aiaadm@aia.edu
Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/atlanta
Degrees/certificates offered: AA, BA, BFA, BS, Diploma (depending on program). The college offers degree programs in Game Art & Design, Visual & Game Programming, Media Arts & Animation and Digital Filmmaking & Video Production, among others
Number of students in animation program: Media Arts & Animation: 256, Game Art & Design/Visual & Game Programming: 122, Digital Filmmaking & Video Production: 307
Cost of program: \$418 per credit hour; \$20,064 per academic year (as of 11/06)
Head of animation: Vacant
Head of admissions: Newton I. Myvett, Vice President, director of admissions
Time of year offered: Year-round quarter system
Application deadline: Rolling
Equipment: A cel animation studio and specialized computer lab, using industry-standard software. The college as a whole offers computer labs, art studios, classrooms, multimedia library, café and deli, supply store and gallery.

The Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University

Boston, MA
Phone: 617-585-6710 or 800-773-0494 Ext. 6710
Fax: 617-585-6720
E-mail: admissions@aiboston.edu
Website: www.aiboston.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Animation, Fine Arts, Photography, Illustration, Art History, Graphic Design, MFA in Visual Arts, Advanced Professional Certificate in Illustration, Animation or Graphic Design.

Number of students in animation program: 42
Cost of program: Tuition: \$21,500 per year; Housing: \$10,500 per year
Head of animation: Robert Kaufman, rkaufman@aiboston.edu
Head of admissions: Bonnie M. Galinski, broth@lesley.edu
Time of year offered: Fall and spring admission
Application deadline: Rolling admission
Equipment: Animation labs with digital video stations

The Art Institute of California-Los Angeles

Santa Monica, CA
Phone: 888-646-4610
Fax: 310-752-4700
E-mail: aiaadm@aia.edu
Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/losangeles
Degrees/certificates offered: Game Art & Design (BS), Media Arts & Animation (BS), Interactive Media Design (BS/AS), Digital Filmmaking & Video Production (BS), Video Production (AS), Graphic Design (BS/AS), Interior Design (BS), Culinary Arts (AS), Culinary Management (BS), The Art of Cooking (D), Baking & Pastry (D) [BS=Bachelor of Science, AS=Associate of Science, D=Diploma]
Number of students in animation program: 467 (as of April 2006)
Cost of program: \$438 per credit
Head of animation: Aaron Lyle
Head of admissions: Roger Gomez
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: Quarterly (rolling enrollment)

The Art Institute of California-Orange County

Santa Ana, CA
Phone: 714-830-0200 or 888-549-3055
Fax: 714-556-1923
E-mail: aicaocadm@aia.edu
Website: www.aicaoc.aia.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Media Arts & Animation (BS), Game Art & Design (BS), Interactive Media Design (AS, BS)

continued on page A16

GAME DEVELOPERS EXCHANGE

GDX 2007

The Southeast's premiere game
development conference

DingDing Chung, Taipei, Taiwan.
M.F.A. student in animation,
Night Cherry Blossom, Maya 7.0, 2005.

April 26: Women in Games International Conference
April 27: GDX Conference
Savannah, Ga.

Savannah College of Art and Design presents GDX. GDX brings together game developers, educators and students with renowned industry experts who share their behind-the-scenes knowledge. Participants choose from a variety of sessions, lectures and panel discussions in four game development tracks: art, technical, design and business. In addition, the Women in Games International Conference, "Advancing Your Career in Game Development" will be held on Thursday, April 26.

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WOMEN IN GAMES INTERNATIONAL

www.scad.edu/gdx

Number of students in animation program: Approximately 600
Cost of program: \$403 per credit hour plus fees
Head of animation: Larry Richman, academic department director
Head of admissions: Tim Hansen, director of admissions
Time of year offered: Year-round on a quarter system
Application deadline: Rolling admission

The Art Institute of California-San Diego

San Diego, CA
Phone: 800-591-2422
Fax: 619-291-3206
E-mail: aicaadm@aia.edu
Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/sandiego
Degrees/certificates offered: BS, BFA, AS
Number of students in animation program: 300
Cost of program: \$438/credit
Head of animation: Susan Varnum
Head of admissions: Elizabeth Erickson
Time of year offered: Fall, winter, spring, summer
Application deadline: Rolling admission
Equipment: Computer labs, 2D capture room, life drawing rooms, lightboxes

The Art Institute of California-San Francisco

San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-865-0198 or 888-493-3261
Fax: 415-863-6344
E-mail: aicasfadm@aia.edu
Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/sanfrancisco
Degrees/certificates offered: BS and MFA
Number of students in animation program: 350
Cost of program: \$430/credit hour for BS and \$516/credit hour for MFA
Head of animation: Valerie Mih
Head of admissions: Daniel Cardenas
Time of year offered: Rolling admissions year
Application deadline: Rolling admissions year

The Art Institute of Las Vegas

Henderson, NV
Phone: 702-369-9944
Fax: 702-992-8564
E-mail: jkerbaugh@aia.edu
Website: www.aiv.artinstitutes.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BS in Media Arts and Animation

Number of students in animation program: 250
Cost of program: \$80,000
Head of animation: Jon Kerbaugh
Head of admissions: Richard Kriofsky
Time of year offered: All
Application deadline: N/A
Equipment: Industry standard

The Art Institute Online

Pittsburg, PA
Phone: 877-872-8869
E-mail: aioadm@aia.edu
Website: www.aionline.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Bachelor: Advertising, Culinary Management, Fashion & Retail Management, Game Art & Design, Graphic Design, Hotel & Restaurant Management, Interior Design, Interactive Media Design, Media Arts & Animation
Associate: Graphic Design, Interactive Media Design
Diploma: Digital Design, Residential Planning, Web Design
Number of students in animation program: 500
Cost of program: \$407 per credit
Head of admissions: Donald Fisher
Time of year offered: Eight starts per year
Equipment: PC and required software

The Art Institute of Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 800-275-2474 or 215-567-7080
E-mail: aiphinfo@aia.edu
Website: www.aiph.artinstitutes.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Media Arts & Animation-BS
Number of students in animation program: 438 (3,600 college total)
Cost of program: \$76,860 (tuition for 12 quarters, entrance fee, student activity fee and supply kit)
Head of animation: Jeff Otto, academic director
Head of admissions: Larry McHugh
Time of year offered: Winter, spring, summer, fall
Application deadline: Open
Equipment: Animation lunchBoxes, Macintosh computer labs, Windows computer labs, audio studio, stop-motion studio, motion capture, render farm

The Art Institute of Phoenix

Phoenix, AZ
Phone: 800-474-2479
Fax: 602-331-5301
E-mail: aipxadm@aia.edu
Website: www.aipx.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: Associate and Bachelor Degree programs
Cost of program: \$387 per credit hour
Head of animation: Gregg Durham, Sr. academic director
Head of admissions: Marilyn Silver
Application deadline: N/A

The Art Institute of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA
Phone: 800-275-2470 Ext. 6353
Fax: 412-263-6667
E-mail: bweber@aia.edu
Website: www.aip.aia.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Diploma, AS and BS Degrees
Number of students in animation program: 150+
Cost of program: \$419 per credit hour
Head of animation: Hans Westman
Head of admissions: Jeffrey Bucklew, director of admissions
Time of year offered: January, February, April, July, August, October, November
Application deadline: Rolling admissions

The Art Institute of Seattle

Seattle, WA
Phone: 206-448-0900
Fax: 206-269-0275
E-mail: aisadm@aia.edu
Website: www.ais.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Media Arts & Animation; BFA Game Art and Design; AAA in Animation Art & Design
Number of students in animation program: Approx. 450 in AAA and BFA programs combined
Cost of program: \$390 per credit
Head of animation: Roby Gilbert, academic director
Head of admissions: Lynette Rickman, director of admissions
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: Open
Equipment: Maya, Max, 3D scanner, 2D and 3D animation studios, Stop-motion studio, soundstages, full audio recording facilities, green screen, TV studio, video editing suites, digital theater.

The Art Institute of Vancouver

Vancouver, BC, Canada
Phone: 604-298-5400 or toll free 800-661-1885
Fax: 604-298-5403
Email: aivinfo@aia.edu
Website: www.aiv.aia.edu
Diplomas offered: Animation Art & Design Diploma, Visual Effects

Diploma, Game Art & Design Diploma
Head of animation: Jeremy McCarron
Head of admissions: Larry Heinzlmeir
Time of year offered: January, April, July, October
Application deadline: One month prior to class start

The Art Institute of Washington

Arlington, VA (Greater Washington DC Metro)
Phone: 703-358-9550 or toll free 877-303-3771
Fax: 703-358-9759
E-mail: scruley@aia.edu
Website: www.aiw.aia.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Media Arts & Animation, Game Art & Design, Visual & Game Programming, Advertising, Audio Production, Culinary Arts, Culinary Arts-Baking & Pastry, Culinary Arts Management, Commercial Photography, Digital Filmmaking & Video Production, Fashion & Retail Management, Graphic Design, Interactive Media Design, Interior Design, Photographic Imaging, Video Production
Number of students in animation program: 300+
Head of animation: Karen Johnson
Head of admissions: Sara Cruley
Time of year offered: Each quarter
Application deadline: Rolling admission

The Bakshi School of Animation and Cartooning

Silver City, NM
Phone: 505-534-9291
Email: info@thebakshischool.com
Website: www.thebakshischool.com
Certificate programs offered: Ongoing classes and workshops. Private instruction is also available.
Cost: Varies with courses
Head of Animation: Eddie Bakshi and Jess Gorell
Head of Admissions: Jess Gorell
Time of Year Offered: Year-long schedule
Equipment: Includes traditional drawing set ups (with light tables) as well as computers with 2D and 3D software and peripheral programs. In-house recording capabilities

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT
Phone: 801-422-8773

continued on page A18

ANIMATED



Raw talent with a passion to learn—that's how I'd describe Edinboro students. They enter the animation program knowing very little about the process and the opportunities for a career in this field. But, the spirit of collaboration among supportive faculty, student peers and resources helps each student identify and grow their unique talent. They leave Edinboro with a confidence and ability to compete in a variety of careers in animation—from feature films to toy and automobile design. The names of our graduates can be found in the credits of nearly every animated film produced today, including *Robots*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, and *Ice Age 2 The Meltdown*.

I invite you to learn more about Edinboro University's Art Department and our animation program. Call today or visit us online.

Michael A. Genz, M.F.A.

Instructor

Department of Art (Animation)



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Fax: 801-422-0695
E-mail: kelly_loosli@byu.edu/
advisement_secretary@byu.edu
Website: www.et.byu.edu/animation
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Animation
Number of students in animation program: 20 a year for a total of 60
Cost of program: <http://saas.byu.edu/tuition>
Head of animation: Kelly Loosli
Head of admissions: Kelly Loosli
Time of year offered: Fall semester start date
Application deadline: April 1 for new students, August 1 for transfer students

Brooks College

Long Beach, CA
Phone: 866-746-5711
E-mail: jhobbs@brookscollege.edu
Website: www.brookscollege.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Associate Degree Multimedia/Animation
Cost of program: \$30,000
Head of animation: Jodi Hobbs
Head of admissions: Christina Veron
Time of year offered: Quarterly
Application deadline: None
Equipment: 3D studio Max, Photoshop, Illustrator, Flash, Toon Boom, PC/MAC systems

California Institute of the Arts

Valencia, CA
Phone: 661-255-1050
Fax: 661-253-7710
E-mail: admiss@calarts.edu
Website: www.calarts.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA and Certificate of Fine Arts, MFA and Advanced Certificate of Fine Arts
Number of students in animation program: Character Animation: 160; Experimental Animation: 80
Cost of program: Tuition (06/07): \$29,300
Head of animation: Character Animation: Frank Terry; Experimental Animation: Maureen Selwood and Paul Vester
Head of admissions: Carol Kim
Time of year offered: September through May
Application deadline: Recommended January 5
Equipment: State of the art film, video and 2D and 3D computer animation

California State University Fullerton

Fullerton, CA
Phone: 714-278-3471

Fax: 714-278-2390
E-mail: dlamb@fullerton.edu
Website: www.fullerton.edu/arts/art
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Entertainment Art and Animation, BFA Illustration, MA and MFA in Illustration
Number of students in animation program: 100
Cost of program: Tuition is \$2,400 a year
Head of animation: Dana Lamb
Head of admissions: See University website
Time of year offered: Fall, spring, and summer semesters
Application deadline: See University website

California State University Northridge (CSUN)

Northridge, CA
Phone: 818-677-2242
E-mail: mary.a.trujillo@csun.edu
Website: www.csun.edu/art/05/areas
Degrees/certificates offered: BA, Animation Concentration, studies in 3D CG and 2D, Drawing Development, Game Design, Visual Effects, Motion Graphics, Web Design
Number of students in animation program: 350 students per year take animation classes, 150 dedicated to Animation Concentration
Cost of program: \$3,000 per year
Head of animation: Prof. Mary Ann Trujillo
Head of admissions: Svet Pirjan, Art Advisement Center
Time of year offered: Fall & spring
Application deadline: November
Equipment: Two animation labs & one Video-Digital Lab. Seventy-five Mac stations with Maya 3D Computer Animation software; 2D Digital Flash and digital drawing tablets. Additional software: Photoshop, After Effects, Final Cut Pro, Illustrator, 23 Animation Light Tables, two LunchBox pencil testers.

Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University

Waltham, MA
Phone: 1-800-808-CDIA (2342)
Fax: 781-209-1701
E-mail: info@cdiabu.com
Website: www.cdiabu.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificates in 3D Animation, Visual Effects, Game Art & Design
No. of students in animation program: 60

Cost of program: \$21,000
Head of animation: Mark Thompson
Head of admissions: Kerri Olson
Time of year offered: Three starts per year—spring, summer and fall terms
Application deadline: Rolling deadline
Equipment: All equipment is provided

College for Creative Studies

Detroit, MI
Phone: 313-664-7425 or 800-952-ARTS
Fax: 313-872-2739
E-mail: admissions@ccscad.edu
Website: www.ccscad.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA degrees in 11 studio majors (Advertising Design, Animation & Digital Media, Art Education, Crafts, Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Illustration, Interior Design, Photography, Product Design, Transportation Design)
Number of students in animation program: Approximately 160
Cost of program: Tuition (2006-07): \$783 per credit hour or \$11,745 per semester for full-time enrollment, 12-18 credits.
Commitment Fee: \$100 per semester
Head of animation: Jay Nelson, interim chair
Head of admissions: Julie Hingelberg, dean of enrollment services
Time of year offered: Fall and winter semesters. The CCS Continuing Education program also offers animation courses for non-degree students year-round
Application deadline: Fall semester deadlines—August 1: completed applications due; August 15: student deposits/commitment fees due.
Winter semester deadlines—December 1: completed applications due; December 15: student deposits/commitment fees due
Equipment: CCS provides 415 student computers, featuring the most up-to-date equipment and software available for two- and three-dimensional design, animation, and audio and video editing.

College of the Canyons

Santa Clarita, CA
Phone: 661-362-5039
Fax: 661 362-3043
E-mail: marc.ratner@canyons.edu
Website: www.canyons.edu/

animation
Degrees/certificates offered: AA degrees: Animation Production, Computer Animation; Certificates: Animation Production, Computer Animation, Video Game Animation
Number of students in animation program: Approx. 40
Cost of program: \$20 per unit
Head of animation: Marc J. Ratner
Head of admissions: Deborah Rio
Time of year offered: Fall, winter, spring, summer
Equipment: Computer animation lab with render farm, three lunchBoxes, drawn animation lab, mini DV recording, DAT recording

Collin County Community College

Plano, TX
Phone: Tom Ottinger, 972-516-5089
Fax: 972-881-5103
E-mail: tottinger@ccccd.edu
Website: www.ccccd.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: AAS and Certificate degrees in 3D Animation and Game Art and Animation
Number of students in animation program: Approx. 150
Cost of program: Less than \$3,000 to complete an AAS degree, resident tuition. Non-resident tuition only slightly higher
Head of animation: Tom Ottinger, tottinger@ccccd.edu
J. Marshall Pittman, mpittman@ccccd.edu
Head of admissions: Admissions and Records Office – 972-881-5710
www.ccccd.edu/register.html
Time of year offered: Fall, spring and summer semesters
Application deadline: Flexible

Columbia College Chicago

Chicago, IL
Phone: 312-344-6738
Fax: 312-344-8044
E-mail: byoung@colum.edu
Website: www.filmatcolumbia.com
Degrees/certificates offered: BA Degree in Film & Video
Number of students in animation program: 259
Cost of program: \$16,408
Head of animation: Barry Young
Head of admissions: Murphy Monroe
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: Fall–May 1; Spring–November 15
Equipment: The 18,500 sq. ft. facilities include a full range of digital and analog animation equipment. Please email to request

continued on page A20



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www.vfs.com/animation

Film still from "A Great Big Robot From Outer Space Ate My Homework" by VFS Animation grad Mark Shirra, winner of Best Student Production at the Leo Awards, now working for Pixar.

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an Animation Program Guide for a more complete listing of equipment and facilities.

Columbus College of Art and Design

Columbus, OH
Phone: 614-224-9101
Fax: 614-232-8344
E-mail: admissions@ccad.edu
Website: www.ccad.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Media Studies with an emphasis in Time-Based Media (Animation, Video, and Interactive Design); and Computer Game Development courses
Number of students in animation program: Approx. 85 students
Cost of program: \$20,736 per year
Head of animation: Ron Saks
Head of admissions: Thomas Green
Time of year offered: Full-year semester based program
Application deadline: Rolling admissions
Equipment: Full server based PC and Mac Labs for 3D CGI and 2D digital-animation production; 3D digitizing Micro-scribe; render farm; Traditional animation lab includes 20 animation tables; three flatbed optical-pin-registered auto-feed scanners for high-end digital 2D ink-paint and compositing; 22 Wacom Intuous tablets with pressure sensitive pens; Shooting stage includes cold and hot lights, cyclorama, and blue and green screen backdrops; Off-line digital sound-recording suite. Software includes: Maya (21 seats in two labs), Toon Boom's Harmony (22 seats in two labs and scanning stations), Flash, Director, After Effects, Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, Shockwave 3D, Wild Tangent, Nuke, Soundtrack Pro and Photoshop.

The DAVE School

Orlando, FL
Phone: 407-224-3283 or 407-224-DAVE
Fax: 407-224-5648
E-mail: Jeff@DaveSchool.com
Website: www.DaveSchool.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Diploma & Occupational Associates Degree
Number of students in animation program: 75-85
Cost of program: \$29,500
Head of animation: Jeff Scheetz
Time of year offered: January, April, July, September
Application deadline: Open enrollment

De Anza College

Cupertino, CA
Phone: 408-864-5663
Fax: 408-864-8492
E-mail: MMcNamara@deanza.edu
Website: www.deanza.edu/animation
Degrees/certificates offered: Many students are post-graduates doing specialized vocational training. AA Degree in Film/TV-Animation; Certificates in Animation Production, Computer Animation or Animation History & Criticism
Number of students in animation program: 80 - 100
Cost of program: \$13/unit
Head of animation: Martin McNamara. Other faculty work full-time at leading animation studios such as Pacific Data Images/DreamWorks, Electronic Arts and Sony Imageworks
Head of admissions: Kathy Kyne
Time of year offered: Fall, winter, spring, summer quarters. Can start any quarter
Application deadline: None, but classes fill early and continuing students have registration priority
Equipment: Animation drawing studio with individual workstations and pencil test stands; Puppet animation studio with computer motion control tracking camera (Kuper Controls software) and frame grabbers; Computer animation lab with Maya Unlimited, Softimage Toonz; etc. Web/Multimedia animation lab with Macromedia Flash, Adobe Photoshop, etc.; Complete film department with sound studios, shooting stage, editing suites.

DigiPen Institute of Technology

Redmond, WA
Phone: 425-558-0299
Fax: 425-558-0378
E-mail: info@digipen.edu
Website: www.digipen.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Production Animation
Number of students in animation program: 180
Cost of program: \$54,000
Head of animation: Abbott Smith, associate dean arts and animation division
Head of admissions: Angela Kugler
Time of year offered: Fall only
Application deadline: See website

Digital Media Arts College

Boca Raton, FL
Phone: 866-255-3622
Fax: 561-391-2480
E-mail: admissions@dmac.edu.org

Website: www.digitalmediaartscollege.us
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA, MFA
Number of students in animation program: 220
Cost of program: \$19,500 per academic year for BFA (3 Year Degree); \$21,500 for academic year for MFA
Head of animation: Andres Del Valle, computer animation chairperson
Head of admissions: Tony Palmieri
Time of year offered: Spring semester: January; summer semester: June; fall semester: September
Application deadline: Four weeks before the first day of class. Space is limited in all programs. For this reason we request applications to all departments be submitted early.
Equipment: Motion Capture Studio, Boxx workstations, Dual 2.4 ghz Intel Pentium 4 Xeon processors, DVD/CD Burner, 19" Dell Ultrasharp LCD Monitors, Apple PowerMac G5, Dual 1.8Ghz Processors, 22" Apple Cinema Displays, 24" Dell Ultrasharp LCD Monitors, 23" Apple Cinema Displays, Epson 4490 Photo Scanner, HP 2300 LaserJet Printer, HP DesignJet 120nr Large-format printer, Epson r2400 color printer

Digital Media Institute

Tonkawa, OK
Phone: 580-628-6458
Fax: 580-628-6209
E-mail: brad.matson@north-ok.edu
Website: www.north-ok.edu/dmi
Degrees/certificates offered: AAS
Number of students in animation program: 20 per year
Cost of program: Less than \$3,500 for OK resident
Head of animation: Brad Matson
Head of admissions: Brad Matson
Time of year offered: August-May
Application deadline: July 1, 2007
Equipment: 20 Dual Monitor Production and Post Suites.

Digital-Tutors

Oklahoma City, OK
Phone: 866-741-6725 or 405-603-2271
Fax: 405-470-0110
E-mail: bmo@digital-tutors.com
Website: www.digitaltutors.com
Degrees/certificates offered: N/A
Number of students in animation program: Over 60,000
Cost of program: Free online tutorials, CD-based training products range from \$25-\$89
Time of year offered: Year-round

Equipment: Maya, XSI, 3DS Max, ZBrush, Mudbox, RealFlow, RenderMan, SyFlex, After Effects, Shake, Toxik, Nuke, etc.
About Digital-Tutors: Digital-Tutors is an internationally known innovator of interactive training solutions whose client list includes thousands of students, professionals, Fortune 500 Companies, U.S. government agencies, schools and nonprofit associations from across the globe.

Earthlight Pictures Animation Training

Portland, OR; Santa Barbara & Santa Monica, CA; Vancouver, WA, and elsewhere nationwide via teletraining
Phone: 503-697-7914
E-mail: JT@earthlightpictures.com
Website: www.earthlightpictures.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificates
Number of students in animation program: varies widely
Head of animation: John Tetton
Time of year offered: All four quarters each year
Application deadline: Depends on session

Ecole Des Metier Du Cinema D'Animation (EMCA)

Angouleme, France
Phone: +1 33 5 45 93 60 70
Fax: +1 33 5 45 93 60 80
E-mail: emca@angouleme.cci.fr
Website: www.angouleme-emca.fr
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate from the Chamber of Commerce
Number of students in animation program: 18/year x 3 years
Cost of program: 3,500 euros/year
Head of animation: Christian Arnau
Head of admissions: Christian Arnau
Time of year offered: September to June
Application deadline: April 2007
Equipment: As a professional studio (2D, 3D, stop motion, Flash, Toon Boom, pegs, 3ds Max, Maya, etc.)

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Edinboro, PA
Phone: 814-732-2000
Fax: 814-732-2420 (Admissions)
Website: www.edinboro.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Applied Media Arts, Concentration in Cinema
Number of students in animation

continued on page A22

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www.vanarts.com



program: 150
Cost of program: \$3,449 per semester
Head of animation: Mike Genz, mgenz@edinboro.edu
Head of admissions: Mr. Terrence Carlin
Time of year offered: Fall, spring
Application deadline: Fall–July 1, spring–November 20

Escape Studios

London, U.K.
Phone: +44 (0)20 7348 1920
Fax: +44 (0)20 7348 1921
E-mail: info@escapestudios.co.uk
Website: www.escapestudios.co.uk
Degrees/certificates offered: Training for the CGI industries – 2D and 3D
Head of animation: Lee Danskin–Course Director
Head of admissions: Jason Jenner–Courses Manager
Time of year offered: All year

Ex'pression College for Digital Arts

Emeryville, CA
Phone: 877-833-8800
Fax: 510-658-3414
E-mail: admissions@expression.edu
Website: www.expression.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Bachelor's of Applied Science Degrees in: Animation & Visual Effects, Motion Graphic Design, Sound Arts
Number of students in animation program: 400
Cost of program: \$16,950 per academic year (total tuition for BAS program is \$67,800)
Head of animation: Andrew Britt
Head of admissions: Brittany Riddell
Time of year offered: Rolling admissions – there are 9 class starts annually.
Equipment: Ex'pression College has 85,000 square feet of industry grade computer labs and studios and is open 24/7.

First Light Video Publishing

Venice, CA
Phone: 800-262-8862
Fax: 310-574-0886
E-mail: mb@tmwmedia.com
Website: www.firstlightvideo.com
Cost of program: DVD
Head of admissions: Michael Bennett
Time of year offered: Full year

Full Sail Real World Education

Winter Park, FL
Phone: 800-226-7625
E-mail: admissions@fullsail.com
Website: www.fullsail.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Associates & Bachelors Degrees in Computer Animation, Digital Arts & Design, Entertainment Business, Film, Game Development, Recording Arts and Show Production
Number of students in animation program: 692–Computer Animation; 497–Digital Arts & Design; 518–Game Development
Head of animation: Program Director – Pete Bandstra
Head of admissions: Mary Beth Plank-Mezzo
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: Year-round
Equipment: HP x6000 Labs, HPx6200 Labs, HP x8000 Labs and G5 Mac Labs with Maya 8, Shake, Adobe Creative Suite

Glendale Community College

Glendale, CA
Phone: 818-240-1000 Ext. 5815, 5663
E-mail: rdickes@glendale.edu
Website: www.glendale.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Digital/Classical Animation
Number of students in animation program: 80
Cost of program: \$78 for a 15-week course
Head of animation: Roger Dickes
Head of admissions: Sharon Combs
Time of year offered: Semester basis
Application deadline: Open enrollment even one week after the beginning of the course
Equipment: Dual 1.8 Ghz Mac G5 computers

Gnomon School of Visual Effects

Hollywood, CA
Phone: 323-466-6663
Fax: 323-466-6710
E-mail: info@gnomon3d.com
Website: www.gnomonschool.com
Degrees/certificates offered: High-end Computer Graphics Accredited Certificate, Intensive Diploma and Extension Programs
Number of students in animation program: 100
Cost of program: \$43,225 (certificate); \$9,000 (diploma), Varied (Extension)
Head of animation: Darrin Krumweide
Head of admissions: Kristin Bierschbach

Time of year offered: Winter, spring, summer, fall
Application deadline: Ongoing

Gobelins, l'école de l'image

Paris, France
Phone: +1 33 1 40 79 92 12
Fax: +1 33 1 40 79 92 69
E-mail: info@gobelins.fr
Website: www.gobelins.fr
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Number of students in animation program: 100
Cost of program: 2,500 euros (approx. \$3,200) per year
Head of animation: Marie-France Zumofen
Head of admissions: Marcel Villoing
Time of year offered: September through June
Application deadline: March
Equipment: Latest hardware and software (Maya for 3D)

Grand Valley State University, School of Communications, Film and Video Program

Allendale, MI
Phone: 616-331-5000
E-mail: admissions@gvsu.edu
Website: www.gvsu.edu/filmvideo
Degrees/certificates offered: BA, BS in Film/Video with emphasis in Animation
Number of students in animation program: 30
Cost of program: \$3,300 in state, \$6,400 out of state
Head of animation: Deanna Morse
Head of admissions: admissions@gvsu.edu
Time of year offered: Fall and winter
Application deadline: Rolling. Animation program requires secondary admit.
Equipment: Eight Macintosh Graphics labs, LunchBox, 16mm film equipment. Additional workstations including Cintiq tablet

Hennepin Technical College

Brooklyn Park, MN
Phone: 763-488-2515
Fax: 763-488-2948
E-mail: richard.oxley@hennepintech.edu
Website: www.htc-mmvp.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Video Production Specialist two-year diploma and two-year AAS degree, Multimedia Specialist two year Diploma and two-year AAS degree
Number of students in animation

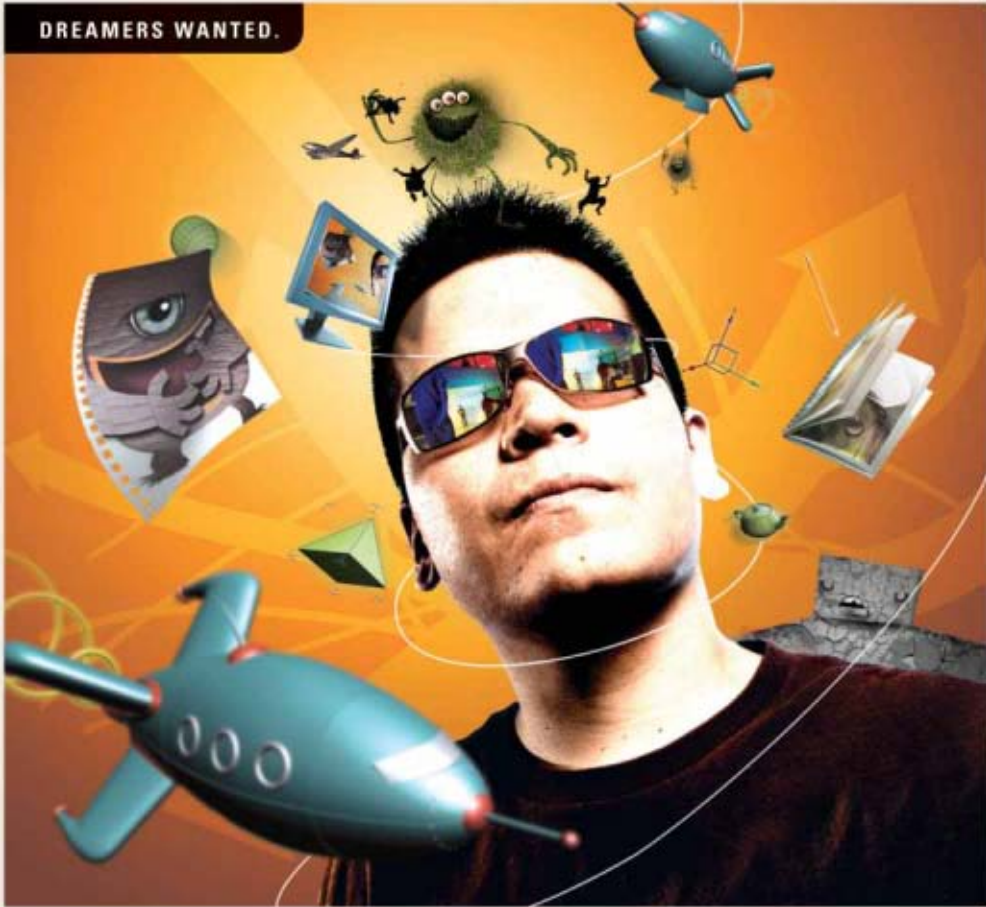
program: 20
Cost of program: Approx. \$4,800 for two years
Head of animation: Rich Oxley
Head of admissions: Julie Higdem
Time of year offered: Fall and spring 16 week semesters
Application deadline: Early August
Equipment: The latest Mac OS X and Windows computers, Scanners, Final Cut Pro, Avid, After Effects.

Indiana University School of Informatics, New Media Program/ Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

Indianapolis, IN
Phone: 317-278-7669; 317-278-INFO (Student Services)
E-mail: Mark McCreary, assistant dean, IU School of Informatics, wmccrear@iupui.edu
Website: <http://newmedia.iupui.edu>
Degrees/certificates offered: BS, Media Arts and Science; MS, Media Arts and Science
Number of students in animation program: 35 graduate students; 401 undergraduate students in New Media Program
Cost of program: MS resident students: \$226.55 per credit hour; MS non-resident: \$653.90 per credit hour; BS resident students: \$197.45 per credit hour; BS non-resident: \$558.46 per credit hour
Head of animation: Joe Defazio, associate professor and interim associate director, New Media Program
Head of admissions: Mark McCreary, assistant dean, IU School of Informatics
Time of year offered: Fall & spring terms (August–December/ January–May)
Application deadline: MS degree program is Nov. 15 for spring semester, March 15 for fall semester. BS degree program deadline is established by the Office of Admissions. Information is available at www.enroll.iupui.edu.
Equipment:

- HP xw4100 Workstations with 3.4 GHz Intel processors, 1.5 GB of RAM, and dual hard drives
- Dell 470 Workstations with 2.8 GHz Xeon processors, 1.5 GB of RAM and dual hard drives
- Apple iMacs with 2.0 GHz Intel Core Duo processors, 2.0 GB of RAM and a 500 GB hard drive
- Many of the computers equipped with Wacom tablets

continued on page A24



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International Academy of Design & Technology

Tampa, FL
Phone: 800-ACADEMY (800-222-3369)
Fax: 813-881-0008
E-mail: admissions@academy.edu
Website: www.academy.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Computer Animation
Number of students in animation program: 290
Cost of program: \$6,030 per academic term at 16 credits/term
Head of animation: Mr. Ray Eales
Head of admissions: Ms. Heidi-Lee Demello
Time of year offered: All year

Human Computer Interaction, Iowa State University

Ames, IA
Phone: 515-294-2089
Fax: 515-294-5530
E-mail: hci@iastate.edu
Website: www.hci.iastate.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: PhD/MS/Certificate
Number of students in animation program: 63
Cost of program: 2006-2007 tuition for graduate assistants is \$2,968 each for fall and spring semesters. Plus mandatory student fees (health center, activity, and energy surcharge) are \$382 per semester plus any applicable computer fees (\$200.50 for Comp. Sci and MIS majors and \$218.50 for Engineering.)
Head of animation: James Oliver, director of the HCI Graduate Program
Head of admissions: Same
Time of year offered: Applications are taken for fall, spring, summer semesters
Application deadline: Oct 1 and March 1

ITT Technical Institute

MA 01867
Phone: 800-430-5097
Fax: 781-937-3402
Website: www.itt-tech.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Associate Degree, Multimedia, Computer Drafting & Design, Computer Network System, Computer & Electronics

Learn 3D Autodesk Media & Entertainment Training Centre Johannesburg, South Africa

Phone: +27 82 922 7155
Fax: +27 11 886 8574
E-mail: gustavo@touchvision.co.za
Website: www.touchvision.co.za
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate in 3D Animation & Visual Effects
Number of students in animation program: 15
Cost of program: \$4,600
Head of animation: Gustavo E. de M. Correa
Head of admissions: Gustavo E. de M. Correa
Time of year offered: Full-time (one year)
Application deadline: January
Equipment: x86 based workstations

Massachusetts College of Art

Boston, MA
Phone: 617-879-7000
Website: www.massart.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA, MFA, MS in Art Education, Teaching Certificate, Fashion Design Certificate, Graphic Design Certificate, Industrial Design Certificate
Number of students in animation program: 50
Cost of program: In-state tuition & fees: \$7,200; Out-of-State tuition & fees: \$20,600
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: February 15

Max The Mutt Animation School

Toronto, Ontario Canada
Phone: 416-703-6877 or 877-486-6888
Fax: 416-703-3930
E-mail: info@maxthemutt.com
Website: www.maxthemutt.com
Degrees offered: Classical and Computer Animation (3 years), Full-time and self paced; Illustration for Sequential Arts: Comic books and Graphic Novels (3 years), Full-time and self paced; Advanced Diploma in 3D Animation and Production (1year) Full-time only
Directors: Maxine Schacker, director; Tina Seemann, director of animation; Van Olson, director of admissions
Time of year offered: September to May, annually.
Applications deadlines: Early application deadline: end of November; Regular application

deadline: end of March; Scholarship deadline: end of March
Equipment: Light Tables, Flash, Photoshop, Maya

Media Design School

Auckland, New Zealand
Phone: +64 9 30 30 402
Fax: +64 9 30 30 646
E-mail: enquiries@mediadesign.school.nz
Website: www.mediadesign.school.nz
Degrees/certificates offered: Diploma of 3D Computer Animation, Graduate Diploma of Advanced 3D Productions, Graduate Diploma of Creative Technologies (3D Imagery and Visualisation)
Number of students in animation program: 70-100
Cost of program: Diploma of 3D Computer Animation - NZ\$19,462.50; Graduate Diploma of Advanced 3D Productions (two years) - NZ\$36,000; Graduate Diploma of Creative Technologies (3D Imagery and Visualisation) - NZ\$17,640
Head of animation: Don Smith
Head of admissions: Jussi Luukkonen
Time of year offered: Diploma of 3D Computer Animation - May 07, Aug 07; Graduate Diploma of Advanced 3D Productions - May 07, Aug 07; Graduate Diploma of Creative Technologies (3D Imagery and Visualisation) - May 07, Oct 07
Application deadline: 8 - 20 weeks before course start date

Mt. San Jacinto College

Menifee, CA
Phone: 951-639-5545
Fax: 951-672-7915
E-mail: dsmith@msjc.edu
Website: <http://multimedia.msjc.edu/animation/index.html>
Degrees/certificates offered: AS Multimedia, Multimedia with Special Concentration: Animation AA Art, AS Computer Information Science
Cost of program: \$20 per unit (resident) \$160 per unit (non-resident). Most courses are 3 units
Head of animation: Don Smith
Head of multimedia department: Don Smith
Time of year offered: Fall, spring and summer semesters
Equipment: PCs with Maya

National Animation and Design Centre (NAD Centre)

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Phone: 514-288-3447
Fax: 514-288-5799
E-mail: info@centrenad.com
Website: www.nadcentre.com
Degrees/certificates offered: We offer two programs: 1) 3D Animation and Visual Effects for Film and Television 2) Design and Digital Art for Video Games
Number of students in animation program: 22 students per program and per session
Cost of program: CAD\$16,500 for Canadian students, CAD\$21,500 for foreign students
Head of animation: Robin Tremblay and Nicolas Poteet
Head of admissions: Sandrine Brandner
Time of year offered: Two entry sessions: September and January
Application deadline: November 1 for the January session, March 1 for the September session
Equipment: Over 120 work stations

NC State University, College of Design

Raleigh, NC
Phone: 919-515-3876 or 919-515-8308
Fax: 919-515-7330
E-mail: susan_brandeis@ncsu.edu
Website: www.ncsudeisign.org/ or www.onebitpixel.com/
Degrees/certificates offered: Bachelor of Art+Design or Master of Art+Design, Animation and Digital Imaging Concentration
Number of students in animation program: Undergraduate Programs, 100
Graduate Program: 24 (approx. 50 EOY 07/08)
Cost of program: Varies depending on semester hours taken and other costs. Average in-state residents tuition & fees/year: approx. \$4,856; Average out-of-state residents tuition & fees/year: \$16,904
More information can be found at www7.acs.ncsu.edu/financial_aid/gradcost.htm
Head of animation: Patrick FitzGerald
Head of admissions: Susan Brandeis
Time of year offered: Full-year semester based program, including summer sessions I + II study abroad opportunities with the animation/drawing studios in Prague
Application deadline: Admissions in fall 07, January/February
Equipment: Windows & Macintosh Labs and clusters, Large format Cintiq & Wacom digitizing tablets, HP 36" color wide format printers,

continued on page A26

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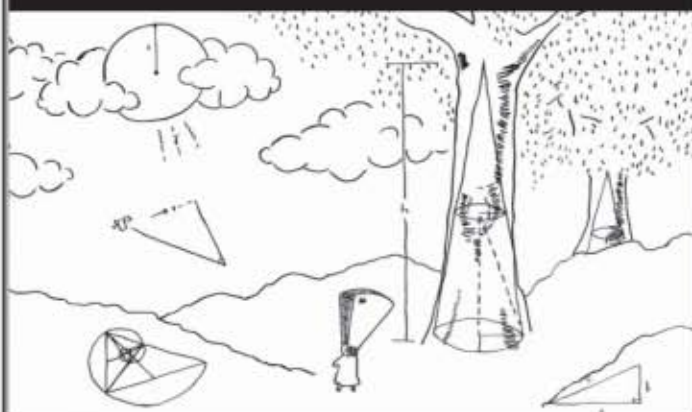


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New Brunswick Community College Miramichi Campus

Miramichi, New Brunswick, Canada
Phone: 506-778-6000 or 877-773-6222
Fax: 506-788-6001
E-mail: nbccmir@gnb.ca
Website: www.nbcc.nb.ca
Degrees/certificates offered: Two year Diploma program
Number of students in animation program: 20 students
Cost of program: \$2,600 per year tuition
Head of animation: Debbie Walls
Head of admissions: Registrar - Charlotte Goguen
Time of year offered: September to June
Application deadline: Applications accepted November 1 - First qualified/first accepted basis
Equipment: Textbooks/Art supplies - approximately \$2,000 per year

New York University Tisch School of the Arts- Kanbar Institute of Film and Television

New York, NY
Phone: 212-998-1700
Fax: 212-995-4062
E-mail: tisch.recruitment@nyu.edu
Website: <http://filmtv.tisch.nyu.edu/page/undergraduate.html>
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Film & Television
Number of students in animation program: Approx. 75
Cost of program: Changes each year
Head of animation: John Canemaker
Head of admissions: Director of Recruitment, Phone 212-998-1900
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: January Freshmen; April Transfers; November Early Decision; See website for details

Northern Michigan University

Marquette, MI
Phone: 906-227-2194
Fax: 906-227-2276
E-mail: art@nmu.edu

Website: art.nmu.edu and www.nmu.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA, BA, BS
Number of students in animation program: 40
Cost of program: Variable
Head of animation: Stephan Larson
Time of year offered: Fall, spring
Application deadline: Variable
Equipment: Apple computer labs (70 workstations); Apple laptops provided; digital still and video cameras; lighting and greenscreen studio.

Oklahoma Christian University

Edmond, OK
Phone: 405-425-5528
E-mail: tony.alley@oc.edu
Website: www.oc.edu/artdesign
Degrees/certificates offered: BA, New Media; BFA, Graphic Design
Number of students in animation program: 30
Cost of program: Tuition, \$13,500; Board, \$7,000
Head of animation: Dr. Tony Alley
Head of admissions: Darci Thompson
Time of year offered: August through May
Application deadline: None
Equipment: Each student receives a Dell laptop. Students also have access to a CG Lab of 21 G5 PowerMacs

Piedmont Community College

Yanceyville, NC
Phone: 336-694-5707
Fax: 336-694-7816
E-mail: hinemap@piedmontcc.edu
Website: www.animatenc.com
Degrees/certificates offered: AAS Digital Effects & Animation
Number of students in animation program: 40
Cost of program: \$650/ per semester (5 semesters)
Head of animation: Paula Hindman
Head of admissions: Sarah Humphrey
Time of year offered: August and January
Application deadline: Anytime
Equipment: 11 Boxx Technologies Dual Core Workstations, 11 Power Mac G5 Workstations, Autodesk Maya & 3DS Max, After Effects, Photoshop, Flash, Dreamweaver, Final Cut Pro

Pratt Manhattan

Center for Continuing & Professional Studies Continuing Education
Training Center: Autodesk®

Training Center, Autodesk® Training Center Media and Entertainment New York, New York
Phone: 212-647-7199
Fax: 212-367-2489
E-mail: prostudy@pratt.edu
Website: <http://ProStudies.pratt.edu>
Contact: Karen Miletsky, associate director
Karen Udo, administrative assistant
Perry Han, administrative assistant
Certificates: Computer Graphics Certificate in: Computer Animation & Video, Interactive Media. Other Computer Graphics certificates offered through continuing education: Electronic Imaging & Illustration, Electronic Publishing, Computer-Aided Design & Visualization
Number of students in animation programs: 200, plus
Cost of programs: Range from \$150-\$835
Head of animation: Karen Adler Miletsky
Head of admissions: Karen Adler Miletsky, Center for Continuing and Professional Studies only
Time of year offered: Fall, spring, summer
Application deadline: Open
Program Statement: Pratt offers certificate programs in Computer Graphics. One area of concentration is in Computer Animation and Video. It is for students who wish to pursue careers in film, entertainment, special effects, game design and broadcast design. Study focuses on the creation and design of time-based media. Choose to focus on a variety of areas, including 2D and 3D animation, including traditional animation, digital video and broadcast design. Students study the choreography and design of complex animated sequences, with topics including creation of titling sequences, editing, compositing, modeling, rendering and animation. Final projects are edited to form a demo reel portfolio.

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Fax: +44 1 834 871 596
E-mail: mo@masterclass.demon.co.uk
Website: www.theanimatorssurvivalkit.com
Contact: Mo Sutton

Ringling School of Art & Design

Sarasota, FL 34234
Phone: 941-351-5100

Fax: 941-359-7517
E-mail: admissions@ringling.edu
Website: www.ringling.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA - 8 Majors, Computer Animation, Digital Film, Fine Arts, Game & Art Design, Graphic & Interactive, Communication, Illustration, Interior Design, Photography & Digital, Imaging
Number of students in animation program: 273
Cost of program: \$24,700 (current - not including Room & Board)
Head of animation: Jim McCampbell
Head of admissions: Jim Dean
Time of year offered: Every Semester - Annually
Application deadline: January 15th, 2007

Rio Hondo Community College

Whittier, CA
Phone: 562-468-7769 and 562-692-0921 Ext. 3586
E-mail: 3dman@charter.net, Daniel Manahan, co-author Inside 3ds Max 7
Website: www.riohondo.edu/tech/cad/3dmodeling.htm
Degrees/certificates offered: Develop demo reel, Drafting 201 and 202, Beginning and Intermediate 3ds Max
Number of students in animation program: Under 50
Cost of program: Under \$100 for 18 weeks of training
Head of animation: Daniel Manahan
Head of admissions: Apply at school in counseling office
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: Apply before college fall and spring semesters
Equipment: Pentium core 2 duo computers with 4GB memory and 1GB ATI 7350 FireGL professional videocard loaded with the latest 3ds Max, Softimage XSI and Adobe Creative Suite software. Description of class: Pay less to develop your 3ds Max demo reel and train for a career in video games, feature films, and architectural visualization

School of Film and Animation, Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester, New York
Phone: 585-475-6175
Fax: 585-475-7575
E-mail: mqbpbph@rit.edu
Website: www.rit.edu/~sofa
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA

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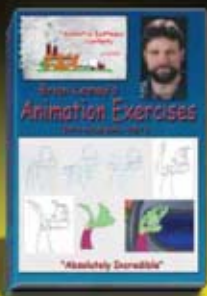
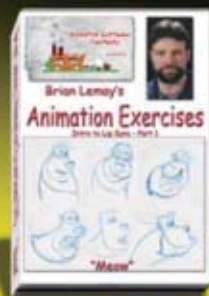
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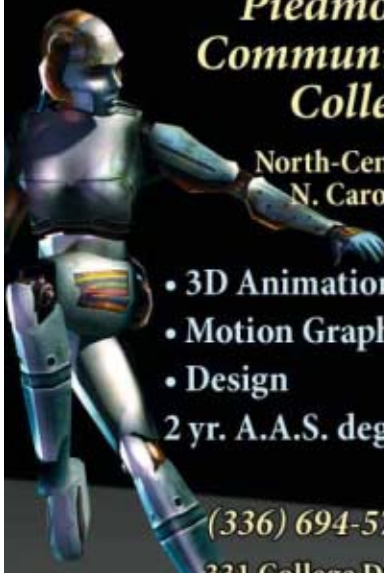
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Film and Animation; BS in Digital Cinema; MFA in Film and Animation
Number of students in animation program: 200 undergraduates, 50 graduates
Cost of program: \$24,600 per year undergraduate;
 \$26,901 per year graduate
Head of animation: Stephanie Maxwell
Head of admissions: Dan Shelley
Time of year offered: Academic year September-May
Application deadline: December 1 earliest submission date for freshman undergraduates, January 1 and rolling for graduates.

Rutgers University

Camden, NJ
Phone: 856-225-6176
Fax: 856-225-6330
E-mail: ltan@camden.rutgers.edu
Website: www.rutgers.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BA
Number of students in animation program: 85
Head of animation: Liqin Tan
Head of admissions: Marty Rosenberg
Time of year offered: Four
Equipment: More than 100 workstations, 33 Softimage

Santa Monica College, Academy of Entertainment & Technology (AET)

Santa Monica, CA
Phone: 310-434-3700
Fax: 310-434-3768
E-mail: http://academy_info@smc.edu
Website: http://academy.smc.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Associates of Arts and two-year Certificates
Number of students in animation program: 400
Cost of program: \$20 per unit CA resident; \$155 - \$180 per unit, out of state and international students
Head of animation: Chris Fria and Jim Keeshen, co-faculty leaders
Head of admissions: Teresita Rodriguez, dean
Time of year offered: Fall and spring semesters with two interim sessions winter/summer
Application deadline: December and June (check exact dates on website)
Equipment: Software: Maya, Houdini, Dreamweaver, PhotoShop, Director, After Effects, Final Cut Pro, And ProTools Shake.
 Hardware: 150 Windows, 125 Macintosh, ProTools 24, Render Farm

Savannah College of Art and Design

Savannah and Atlanta, GA
Phone: 800-869-7223
Fax: 912-525-5986
E-mail: admission@scad.edu
Website: www.scad.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BA, BFA, MA, MFA
Number of students in animation program: 500+
Cost of program: Full-time undergrad 2007-2008 academic year \$24,390
Head of animation: Jeremy Moorshead
Head of admissions: Sara Dorsey
Time of year offered: Courses are offered throughout the year
Application deadline: Rolling admission
Equipment: Macintosh and Hewlett-Packard workstations, software includes After Effects, Premiere, DigiCel Flipbook, Flash and Dreamweaver, Autodesk Maya, Apple Shake and Pixar Renderman.

School of Communication Arts

Raleigh, NC
Phone: 800-288-8495, Ext. 105; 919-488-8500
Fax: 919-488-8490
E-mail: school@higherdigital.com
Website: www.higherdigital.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificates, Diplomas and Associate in Science Degrees.
 Programs: Digital Animation, Digital Media, Digital Filmmaking, Digital Audio & Production Design and Interior Design
Number of students in animation program: Approximately 140
Cost of program: Varies dependent upon type of program. Range: \$13,540 - \$35,500
Head of animation: Erik Westlund, animation program coordinator & instructor: ewestlund@higherdigital.com
Head of admissions: Robert Thornton, director of admissions: rthornton@higherdigital.com
Time of year offered: Year-round College; 4 Starting Classes Each Year
Application deadline: Applications received on an on-going basis

School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong

Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
Phone: +852-2788-7575
Fax: +852-2788-7528
E-mail: jsmoy@cityu.edu.hk
Website: www.cityu.edu.hk/scm

Degrees/certificates offered: Associate Degree, Bachelors Degree, MA, MFA, MPhil, PhD
Number of students in animation program: 31
Cost of program: Undergrad: HK\$42,100/annum, Postgrad: HK\$2,520/ credit unit
Head of animation: Mike Wong
Head of admissions: Ip Yuk-yiu
Application deadline: Feb. 28 (undergrad), March 31 (postgrad)
Equipment: The animation laboratory is equipped with more than 30 sets of high-end workstations and 32-node rendering farm.

School of Design, Digital Media Design, Nanyang Polytechnic

Singapore
Phone: +65-6 550-1821
Fax: +65-6452-0110
E-mail: eugenewongkc@gmail.com
Website: www.nyp.edu.sg
Degrees/certificates offered: Diploma in Digital Media Design
Number of students in animation program: 180
Head of animation: Yang Tien
Head of admissions: Anthony Woon
Time of year offered: Beginning of the year (one admission)
Application deadline: Jan 2007
Equipment: Maya, 3ds Max, on Mac/PC, Apple Shake, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Creative Suite

School of Visual Arts

New York, New York
Phone: 212-27-2000
Fax: 212-725-3587
E-mail: admissions@sva.edu
Website: www.sva.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA is offered in Advertising, Animation, Cartooning, Computer Art, Film & Video, Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Illustration, Interior Design, Photography and Visual and Critical Studies (beginning fall 2007). An MFA is offered in Art Criticism and Writing; Computer Art; Design; Design Criticism (beginning fall 2008); Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; and Photography, Video and Related Media. Master of Professional Studies (MPS) is offered in Art Therapy and Digital Photography (beginning fall 2007) and a Master of Art in Teaching is offered in Art Education.
Number of students in animation program: 204 students in BFA Animation Department, 258 in BFA Computer Art Department, 105 in MFA Computer Art Department.
Cost of program: \$20,800 for

BFA programs; \$24,520 for MFA
 Computer Art Department with an estimated departmental fee is \$1,200 per semester
Head of animation: Reeves Lehman, chair of BFA Film, Video and Animation Department; John McIntosh, chair of BFA Computer Art; Bruce Wands, chair of MFA Computer Art Department
Head of admissions: Adam Rogers
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: Feb. 1
Equipment: BFA Animation Department facility includes drawing studios, digital lunchBoxes pencil test systems and a digital compositing facility with independent workstations. BFA Computer Art Department has abundant SGI, Boxx Technology and Apple computers; nearly 300 computers fill the two floors of computer art classrooms and labs. MFA Computer Art Department facilities include state-of-the-art equipment including a surround sound audio mixing suite, green screen studio featuring a Reflecmia Chromatte and LiteRing, High Definition video editing stations, HD cameras, digital audio and light kits and high-end industry standard 3D animation and compositing software

Seneca College

Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Phone: 416-491-5050 Ext. 3850
Fax: 416-661-7491
E-mail: aac@senecac.on.ca
Website: http://aac.senecac.on.ca
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate in Animation & post-graduated diplomas in 3D Animation, Gaming & Visual Effects
Number of students in animation program: 12 - 40 per classes
Cost of program: See website: http://aac.senecac.on.ca
Head of animation: Mark Jones
Head of admissions: Anna Singh
Time of year offered: September & January
Application deadline: Six months prior to start date
Equipment: Varies

Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advance Learning

Oakville, Ontario Canada
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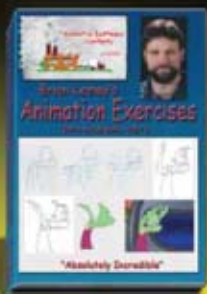
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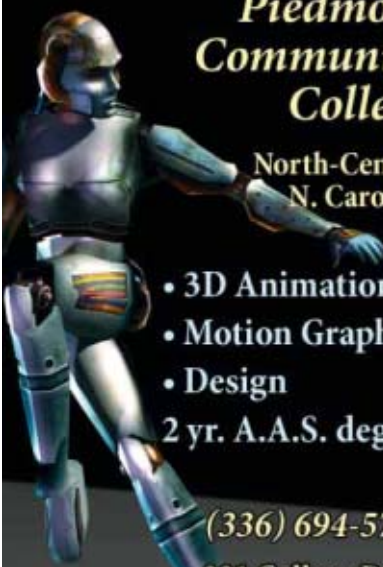
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Degree: Bachelor of Applied Arts (Animation)
Cost of program: \$6,486
Time of year offered: September Start, Application Equal Consideration Date: Feb 1, 2007
Graduate Certificate: Computer Animation
Cost of program: \$12,229
Time of year offered: September start and January start
 Application equal consideration date: Feb 1, 2007
Equipment: N/A
Graduate Certificate: Computer Animation - Digital Visual Effects
Cost of Program: \$12,229
Time of year offered: September start
 Application equal consideration date: Feb 1, 2007
Graduate Certificate: Computer Animation - Digital Character
Cost of program: \$12,229
Time of year offered: September Start
Head of animation: Angela Stukator, associate dean
Head of admissions: Linda Dalton, registrar

St. Mary-of-the-Woods College

St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Phone: 812-535-5106
Fax: 812-535-5010 (Admission Office)
E-mail: Tmccammon@smwc.edu (Program Head)/ SMWCADMS@smwc.edu (Admissions)
Website: www.smwc.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BA-Digital Media (Animation Track) Campus and Distance based
Number of students in animation program: Eight
Cost of program: Campus-\$18,780 per year; Distance-\$356 per credit hr
Head of animation: Terry McCammon
Head of admissions: Theresa Denton
Time of year offered: Rolling Enrollment. The program courses on campus are offered on a two-year rotation, so within two years all courses needed for the major are offered. Within the distance format, the courses are offered as needed by the student.
Application deadline: Rolling Enrollment
Equipment: Computer-based animation using a variety of popular software. Campus students have access to a variety of graphics and media labs, as well as a variety of art studios. Distance students work with advisor to discuss

technology needs.

UCLA Animation Workshop

Los Angeles, CA
Phone: 310-825-5829
Fax: 310-825-3383
E-mail: dward@tft.ucla.edu
Website: animation.filmstv.ucla.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: MFA
Number of students in animation program: 50-60
Cost of program: See website
Head of animation: Dan McLaughlin
Head of admissions: Cecilia Wilmott
Time of year offered: Fall through spring
Application deadline: Feb. 28

UCLA Extension's Department of Entertainment Studies and Performing Arts

Los Angeles, CA
Phone: 310-825-9064
Fax: 310-206-7435
E-mail: entertainmentstudies@uclaextension.edu
Website: www.uclaextension.edu/entertainmentstudies
Degrees/certificates offered: Entertainment Studies is an authorized training center for Apple (Final Cut Studio including Final Cut Pro, DVD Studio Pro, Motion, and Soundtrack Pro; Shake; and Logic Pro), Adobe (After Effects), and Avid. Individual courses are offered in Maya, Pro-Tools, Finale, and Sibelius. Students can enroll in individual courses or pursue a comprehensive certificate program. Entertainment Studies offers 13 certificates in all areas of entertainment: Film, Television, and Digital Entertainment Media Level I and Level II, with specializations in Animation and Advanced Media, Cinematography, Directing, Post Production, or Producing; The Business and Management of Film, Television, and Digital Entertainment Media with specializations in Business and legal Affairs, Finance and Accounting, or Marketing and Distribution; The Music Business; Recording Engineering; and Film Scoring
Cost of program: \$6,200-\$10,000 (depends on courses and electives chosen)
Head of animation: Jane Kagon, department director
Head of admissions: Open enrollment
Time of year offered: Students may begin most programs in any quarter (fall, winter, spring, or summer), however some sequential programs

begin in various quarters. Contact department for more information.

University of Southern California: School of Cinematic Arts

John C. Hench Division of Animation and Digital Arts
 Los Angeles, CA
Phone: 213-821-4396
E-mail: animation@cinema.usc.edu
Website: <http://anim.usc.edu> or cinema.usc.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BA Animation and Digital Arts, MFA Animation and Digital Arts, Minor Animation and Digital Arts
Number of students in animation program: 60
Cost of program: Tuition only: BA: \$16,657 per year flat rate; MFA: \$19,883 per year
Head of animation: Kathy Smith
Time of year offered: Once a year-fall admission
Application deadline: BA: Dec. 10, 2006; MFA: Feb. 15, 2007; Minor: Feb. 15, 2007

The University of the Arts

Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 215-717-6300
E-mail: admissions@uarts.edu
Website: www.uarts.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA
Number of students in animation program: Approximately 100
Cost of program: \$25K per year
Head of animation: Chris Magee
Head of admissions: Barbara Elliot
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: Rolling admission
Equipment: Partial listing: 1 Master Series Oxberry 16/35 Animation Stand; 1 Stop Action Animation Shooting Studio with lighting grid, and shooting tables; 36 Animation tables; 7 Video pencil test systems (4 video Lunchbox capture stations); 2 Bolex 16mm cameras w/animation motors; 3 Kodak Cine Special II 16mm cameras w/animation motors; 1 Animation stand for sand/paint work; 16 Animation Discs; 5 Acme Animation punches; 1 Oxberry punch; 4 Canon ZR100 Mini-DV digital video cameras; 2 Bogen Mini Geared Head Tripods; 2 fully equipped Animation Classrooms, each containing: Macromedia Flash 8 licenses; 7 Discrete Combustion licenses; 2 Sony DSR 40 DVcam Deck; 1 Progressive Peripherals Frame Grabber; 2 Bogen technal TC-1 copystand; 1 NEC MultiSync MT Video Projectors; 1 Canon G2 Digital Camera; 1 IBM eServer X335; 1

IBM eServer X346; 4 Umax Astra 6400 Firewire Scanners; 2 IBM MPro Pentium II 300 (Maya license server); 1 JVC SVHS BRS 800 Video Deck

Postgraduate Diploma in Character Animation, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London

London, U.K.
Phone: Direct line: +44 (0)20 7514 7363
 Information: +44(0)20 7514 7022
Fax: +44 (0)20 7514 7306
E-mail: Course email: las@csm.arts.ac.uk
 Information Office: info@csm.arts.ac.uk
Website: www.londonanimationstudio.tv or www.csm.arts.ac.uk
Degrees/certificates offered: Postgraduate Diploma (Masters level)
Number of students in animation program: 30
Cost of program: See www.csm.arts.ac.uk for up-to-date prices
Head of animation: Birgitta Hosea
Head of admissions: Kristina Davies-Barrett
Time of year offered: October - June
Application deadline: Early - February 12, 2007
 Late - May 28, 2007
Equipment: Each student has sole access to his or her own PC workstation and lightbox. The course also has an edit suite, DVD burners, scanners and line testers.

VanArts (Vancouver Institute of Media Arts)

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 604-682-2787 or 800-396-2787
Fax: 604-684-2789
E-mail: info@vanarts.com
Website: www.vanarts.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Diplomas/Certificates
Number of students in animation program: 100
Cost of program: 2D Animation-\$16,450 CDN (\$18,450 USD); 3D Animation-\$24,950 CDN (\$25,950 USD)
Head of animation: Charles Phillips, Calvin Leduc
Head of admissions: Ken Priebe
Time of year offered: Feb, June, Oct.
Application deadline: N/A

Vancouver Film School

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Phone: 604-685-5808
Fax: 604-685-6389
Website: www.vfs.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Diploma
Cost of program: Students should check with admissions for Canadian and international tuition costs
Head of animation: Larry Bafia
Head of admissions: Benjamin Colling
Time of year offered: Rolling start dates
Application deadline: Check website
Equipment: Fully loaded

Volda University College

Norway
Phone: +47-7007 5000
Fax: +47-7007 5052
E-mail: tlien@hivolda.no/
AndresMa@hivolda.no
Website: www.animationvolda.com/
www.hivolda.no
Degrees/certificates offered: BA in animation
Number of students in animation program: 30
Cost of program: Free
Head of animation: Torbjørn Lien/
 Andres Mänd
Head of admissions: Torbjørn Lien/
 Andres Mänd
Time of year offered: Mid August - Early June
Application deadline: April 15
Equipment: Equipped both for traditional and computer animation. Toons, Flash, After Effects, Maya, AVID.

WEFIS- Westbridge Film School

Mexico City, DF, Mexico
Phone: +52 (55) 5601-8280
E-mail: wefis@westbridge.edu.mx
Website: www.wefis.com
Degrees/certificates offered:
 1) BA in Animation and Visual Effects: A three-year program that takes students from 2D and 3D animation, to Special and Visual Effects
 2) Master in Animated Film Direction: A one year program that is designed for people with working knowledge of animation, and who want to gain the skills for directing and producing animated films
 3) Master in Visual Effects: This one year intensive program explores both traditional and digital visual effects, and is intended for people who already have working knowledge of animation.

Number of students in animation program: BA in Animation and Visual Effects - 24 students; Master in Animated Film Direction - 4 students; Master in Visual Effects - 5 students
Cost of program: BA in Animation and Visual Effects - \$30,000 USD; Master in Animated Film Direction - \$10,500 USD; Master in Visual Effects - \$10,500 USD
Head of animation: Mauricio De la Orta
Head of admissions: Laura Charles
Time of year offered: The BA in Animation and Visual Effects and the Master in Visual Effects begin every September. The Master in Animated Film Direction starts every March.
Application deadline: BA in Animation and Visual Effects - June 12, 2007; Master in Animated Film Direction - Feb 15, 2007; Master in Visual Effects - June 12, 2007
Equipment: 64 bit computer equipment, Maya, Premiere, After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator, Wacom tablets, Digital Still and Video cameras, etc.

Winston-Salem State University

Winston-Salem, NC
Phone: 336-750-2520
Fax: 336-750-2522
E-mail: davisa@wssu.edu
Website: www.wssu.edu/WSSU/UndergraduateStudies/College+of+Arts+and+Sciences/Fine+Arts/Art/
Degrees/certificates offered: BA Degree in Art with Concentration in Computer Graphics & Animation
Number of students in animation program: CA 60
Cost of program: In-state 12 hours & above - \$1,580; Out-of-state 12 hours & above - \$5,900; Campus room & board ranges from \$2,573-\$3,235
Head of animation: Prof. Arcenia M. Davis
Head of admissions: Dr. X Maurice Allen
Time of year offered: Fall (August) and spring (January) semesters
Application deadline: Open
Equipment: Personal computer, preferably Mac

Woodbury University

Burbank, CA

Phone: 800-784-9663
Fax: 818-767-7520
E-mail: admissions@woodbury.edu
Website: www.woodbury.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA
Number of students in animation program: 62
Cost of program: \$23,572 (Tuition & fees only)
Head of animation: Dori Littell-Herrick
Head of admissions: Mauro Diaz
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: Rolling Admissions
Equipment: Traditional/Computer Animation Graphic Labs ■

The listings section of this school guide was compiled using direct information emailed to *Animation Magazine* by participating schools. If you'd like to be included in the 2008 edition of this guide, please email edit@animationmagazine.net.

Pixel Corps Extends Goals for 2007

by Claire Webb

The new year should prove to be another important period for Pixel Corps, the organization that has created a community for aspiring and professional digital media artists worldwide and is developing a standardization process for its members and helping up-and-coming artists navigate the biz. When we last spoke with Pixel Corps, the brainchild of former ILM pro Alex Lindsay, the organization was striving to achieve a process that would create a standard of performance for a guild of artists that were contracted workers in film and television. The goal of PXC is to collect and teach artists to be the best in the world through a network that is based on training, community and production training.

In 2006, the Corps moved forward in achieving its goals by often partnering with leading software providers to benefit members as well as creating a Member Hub where those involved can get the latest news from the industry as well as PXC announcements.

Lindsay notes, "Over the past year, the PXC has not only grown in size but more importantly in experience. For example, early in 2006, the PXC partnered with the San Francisco School for Digital Filmmaking to acquire a Sony F-950 CineAlta. This has pushed the production level of our tests to a much higher level and forced our global pipeline to conform to true film hardened practices."

The organization will also strive to implicate a certification process that would test members and, in the future, facilitate a database for vfx companies to use when they are considering hiring artists. Lindsay says the membership certification is expected to be in place by fall 2007. "Our standardization process has moved forward a great deal over the last year" he adds. "We've taken many of the processes that were handled on a case-by-case basis and begun to truly develop a pipeline that can be re-used across the system. By working on real productions, from broadband to film post, our system has become much more refined."

Find out more about Pixel Corps at www.pixelcorps.com.

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Toons not so Mighty in Old Blighty

The recent ban on junk food ads in the U.K. puts a damper on the country's creative TV animation community. **by Andy Fry**

LONDON Few would dispute the claim that the U.K. has turned out some of the world's best animation production companies. From the Oscar-winning filmmakers at Aardman to preschool hothouses like HOT Animation and Cosgrove Hall, the Brits have always punched above their weight. But year after year it gets tougher for U.K. TV producers to compete.

Swamped by U.S. and Japanese imports, the U.K. has largely become a bit-part player in the 6-11 year-old demo. This situation is not helped by the fact that French animation is supported by subsidies which allow it to dominate European origination. In 2005, for example, France made more animated fare than the U.K., Germany, Italy and Spain put together—268 hours vs. 238 hours (according to *Screen Digest*).

In 2005, fears about the long-term damage being done to the sector's talent base led U.K. indie trade body PACT to call for a £50 million (\$97.4 million) government-backed rights fund. Not a call for a subsidy, the idea behind the fund was that produc-

ers would be able to apply for top-up loans which would allow them to keep work and rights in the U.K. rather than seeing them go abroad as part of co-production arrangements.

Instead of getting its fund, however, November 2006 saw U.K. animators experience another major setback when TV regulator Ofcom decided to impose a ban on junk food advertising aimed at children under 16. Designed as a measure to combat the U.K.'s child obesity crisis, an unwelcome side effect is that it could wipe out a large proportion of the funding that comes to producers from U.K. broadcasters.

PACT believes the new regulation could knock a staggering £25m a year off the £35m currently spent on kids pro-

gramming by U.K. commercial broadcasters. Since animation is the most expensive form of kids' shows, PACT expects broadcasters like free-to-air market-leader ITV to acquire yet more shows from abroad—unless Ofcom prevents it from reducing originations.

Mike Watts, managing director of Novel Entertainment-

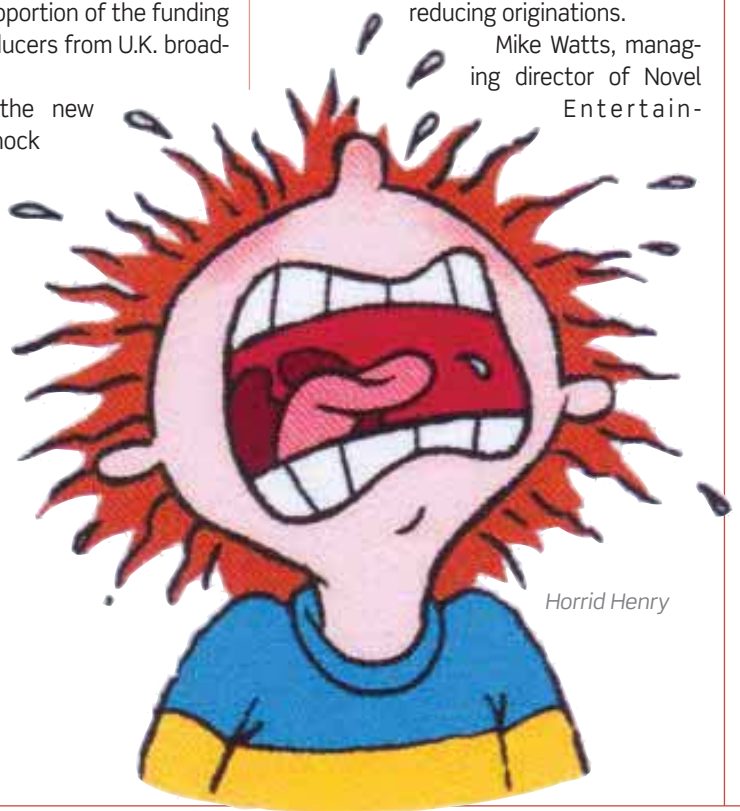
Chop Socky Chooks



Angry Kid



Horrid Henry



ment (which produces ITV's new animated show *Horrid Henry*) and a member of PACT's animation policy group, says the decision to target the entire under 16 age range (rather than the under 9 ban that had been expected) is particularly worrying. "The fact that the ban covers general entertainment programs in addition to children's only fare means kids' hours will undoubtedly be impacted as broadcasters seek to recover losses. That bodes badly for children's and animation production."

Having said all this, U.K.-based producers still retain key advantages over other parts of the world. Public broadcaster the BBC, for example, remains a major player on the international stage—and has recently championed U.K. animation series like Tiger Aspect Productions' *Charlie &*

We're here to produce a few strong shows we believe in—not high volumes of mediocre content."

This message is echoed by other leading Brit producers. Collingwood O'Hare has studiously avoided industrial scale production—preferring to prepare shows carefully during development and make them on U.K. soil (using cutting-edge technology to make them affordable). Likewise at Spellbound Entertainment—which carefully nurtured preschool series *The Koala Brothers* through production and distribution before unveiling an animation version of the children's book property *Q Pootle 5* as its next project.

It's not just a focus on quality which sets the U.K. animation sector apart, however. Also important is the fact that U.K. kids

tion (*Noddy*)—but also to be reckoned with is Contender Group, which used its base in video distribution as the foundation for a move into animation. The result of that was a highly-rated 2D show called *Peppa Pig*.

Another case in point is publicly quoted Entertainment Rights—which has built a studio-style business on the back of rights distribution expertise. In December 2006, ER underlined its international ambition when it announced plans to acquire U.S. studio Classic Media (owner of properties like *Casper* and *Lassie*) for \$210 million. Back home, it plays an important part in U.K. animation ecology by funding high-profile series like *Postman Pat* and *Rupert the Bear* (both produced within the U.K. by Cosgrove Hall).

The ER example is significant because it is part of a broader trend which has seen U.K. kids' studios trying to become less reliant on the money provided by domestic broadcasters. With most networks offering little more than acquisition prices to domestic producers even before Ofcom's intervention in the market, it's exposure that really matters to kids' studios.

Free-to-air network Five's kids chief Nick Wilson, for example, has always understood that the quid pro quo for getting good kids shows cheap is that he must al-

"People have been saying children's TV is in crisis for 40 years. But we just find new ways of solving problems—whether that's closer links with toy companies or the adoption of new production technologies like Toon Boom Harmony."

—Anthony Utley, Cosgrove Hall's managing director

Lola and Collingwood O'Hare's *The Secret Show* (52x13)—a rare example of an animated comedy targeting older kids. 2007 also sees the launch on the BBC of Aardman's *Shaun the Sheep*—a *Wallace & Gromit* spin-off which was the buyers' number-one pick at Mipcom Jr. last fall.

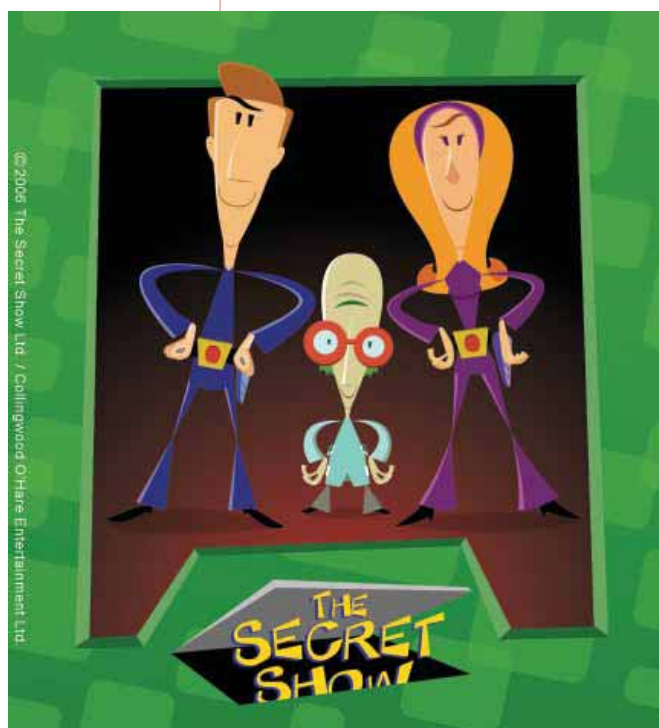
Aardman head of broadcast and development Miles Bullough, who also used Mipcom Jr. to unveil an in-house distribution arm, says there's no avoiding the fact that the new junk food rules are bad news for producers. "But it means we need to be more committed than ever to our core philosophy—which is to focus on quality.

players have a sophisticated understanding of the rights exploitation market. BBC Worldwide, for example, is currently building multi-tiered L&M exploitation programs around *Charlie & Lola* and *The Secret Show*. Finance from private equity and/or stock market investors has also created a hard-core of indie businesses that know how to compete in the international kids' market.

Obvious examples of this are HIT (*Bob the Builder*) and Cho-



Shaun the Sheep



© 2006 The Secret Show Ltd / Collingwood O'Hare Entertainment Ltd

low them room to breathe. For Chorion, owner of *Noddy*, and Chapman Entertainment, owner of *Fifi and the Flowertots*, clearly-signposted TV exposure has undoubtedly helped propel them high up the DVD/video, licensing and merchandising charts in the U.K.

Ultimately, that is where U.K. rights holders will get their returns—if there are any to be had. And it emphasises the point that the real disaster for kids producers in the U.K. would be if ITV is allowed by Ofcom to drop its children's airtime completely (something it has argued for) since this would take away an important shop window.

Viewed like this, it is clear that companies which are over-reliant on production work-for-hire, are most vulnerable to the market shift. So it should come as no surprise, for example, to see Cosgrove Hall, under managing director Anthony Utley, reinventing itself as an IP-owning studio. "We have a lot of creative talent here that has been responsible for making other people's ideas a reality," says Utley. "That work

for 5-8-year-olds which follows the escapades of a galactic delivery boy and his feisty guard-sheep. Already picked up by the BBC, Utley says the show is "a sign of the way we are diversifying our slate—which has traditionally veered more towards preschool."

What is interesting about *RocketBoy & Toro* is that the animation is being done at Korean-based studio Imagestone—a partner in the project—while CH makes do with post-production. The underlying message is that U.K. producers need to cut creative, non-traditional deals, says Utley. "Partnerships are crucial to us. In addition to our link with Imagestone, we have a strategic partnership with Nelvana—a company that has very similar brand attributes to Cosgrove Hall."

In the face of downward pressures on traditional revenue streams, new media perhaps presents an opportunity to generate income. Aardman has already made significant headway in mobile with short-form teen property *Angry Kid*—a popular download. If there is a problem with this area it's that teen content works much better than kids content," says Bullough. "Our experience is that the nonsensical comedy of *Angry Kid* is more effective than something like *Creature Comforts*—which was great on TV and DVD but hasn't shifted the needle on mobile."

Of course, none of the above really compensates for the potential loss of £25 million (\$48.7 million) a year of business as a result of regulatory intervention—particularly when you consider that a number of mainstream indies, including RDF and Lion, launched new kids divisions in the last year.

It also remains to be seen how the U.S.-owned thematic networks will respond to the junk food ad ban. Cartoon Network U.K., for example, has shown signs recently that it is willing to step up investment in U.K. origination—a point exemplified by its involvement in Aardman/Decode's CGI project *Chop Socky Chooks*. But Cartoon Network se-

nior VP Dee Forbes doesn't mince her words when she says, "Ofcom's restrictions and resulting loss of revenue will undermine the breadth of investment in quality original U.K. animation and kids programming, an area which is already overly dependent upon the BBC."

Interestingly, however, Disney Channel, which has been growing audience fast since shifting from premium to basic tier in early 2006, didn't allow Ofcom to spike its December revelation that it is to launch a London production hub. That, says John Hardie, managing director of Walt Disney TV in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, will spearhead "our most significant drive yet to create kids shows in Europe."

The most high-profile of Disney's new projects is a 26-episode animation version of Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* stories—which will be co-produced with rights holder Chorion for launch in 2008. This is an important milestone for Disney and also a reminder that another great British asset is its children's literary heritage.

Utley for one is not despondent about the impact of lost advertising revenues. "People have been saying children's TV is in crisis for 40 years. But we just find new ways of solving problems—whether that's closer links with toy companies or the adoption of new production technologies like Toon Boom Harmony. There's too much ingenuity and commitment for this setback to mean the death of the U.K. animation industry." ■

Andy Fry is a London-based journalist who specializes in television and children's programming.



Anthony Utley



Mike Watts



Miles Bullough



Tony Collingwood



RocketBoy & Toro

is still important to us but we also need to develop our own stable of shows if we are to stay competitive in the longer-term."

In mid-2006, for example, Cosgrove Hall took a stake in *RocketBoy & Toro*—a 52x11 minute comedy action adventure

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French house Futurikon's widely acclaimed animated series *Miniscule* is one of several series available for High-Def channels.

Future of High-Def Toons Far from Crystal Clear

Although several companies are gearing up to deliver HD animated content, many are taking a wait-and-see approach. **by Chris Grove**

At the rate at which high-def television sets are flying off the shelves of your local big box retailer, you might be tempted to think the demand for HD programming would be off the charts. But it's not. Not for live action and not for animated fare either. Why? Among other things, according to a recent study by Frank Magid Associates, a lot of HDTV owners don't know they need to subscribe to upgraded satellite and cable service to get true HD programming.

"(Broadcasters) have not done a good job promoting HD offerings," Maryann Baldwin, director of Magid Media Futures, told *USA Today* recently. As a result, a fall 2006 Forrester Research study found that only seven million of the estimated 16 million HD homes in the U.S. are currently watching high-def content.

Nonetheless, with the 2009 deadline approaching when all TV broadcasting in the U.S. switches to digital, toon houses around the world are beginning to ramp up their production of high-def animation. "From this point forward, all our vector-based shows

are going to be delivered in HD," says Cathal Gaffney, producer at Dublin-based Brown Bag Films. For a mere five percent more than he'd pay to produce a standard aspect ratio (4:3), standard definition show, Gaffney will soon wrap production on 26 five-minute HD segments of *Wobbly Land* for Nick Jr. and HIT Entertainment.

"There's no point in waiting until everybody else is doing it," says Gaffney. Producing in 16:9 HD is the only way, he says, to protect the future marketability and value of an animated show. It's analogous to Desi Arnaz's prescient decision in the 1950s to shoot *I Love Lucy* on multiple film cameras in front

of an audience. Fifty years later, *Lucy's* pristine 35 mm images have given the series a shelf-life decades beyond that of its contemporaries.

Currently, the only channel in the U.S. with a regular schedule of HD animation is *Animania HD*, one of the VoomTV HD channels available to Dish Network subscribers. "(HD animation) is a part of the conversation right now," says Bill Schultz, co-CEO of Taffy Entertainment/Mike Young Productions and producer of the *Animania* hit *Pet Alien*. "But it's not yet a pervasive requirement or standard for delivery." Schultz is not a big fan of remastering existing shows and adds that, with 3D shows

in particular, producers are better off building an HD show from scratch. A frame of animation in SD takes up 1.2 MB of disc space. The same image in HD is 4 MB. It is possible to take the files of an SD show and interpolate the images (or "up-res" them) to an HD-sized image. "But that probably has a damaging effect on the demand for HD, as the experience of the final picture is not as dramatic," Schultz warns.

Vertically integrated Canadian media company Corus Entertainment (Nelvana, YTV, Treehouse, et. al.) began mastering its shows in 16:9 three years ago and HD two years ago. "The



Alison Dexter



Scott Dyer



Cathal Gaffney

"HD animation is a part of the conversation right now, but it's not yet a pervasive requirement or standard for delivery."

—Bill Schultz, CEO of Mike Young Productions/Taffy Entertainment



demand for HD is virtually non-existent," says Scott Dyer, executive vice president and general manager of Corus Kids from his Toronto office. The



The Toll

“Once you have labored for two years on a project and you go to a festival and see it on DigiBeta, you’re very happy. Then when you go to a HD theater and see it at full resolution on a 30-foot screen, your jaw just friggin’ drops.”

—Hatchling Studio CEO and producer of *The Toll*, Marc Dole



rationale behind the company’s strategy is threefold. First, it’s recognition of the inevitability of 16:9 HD as a mass medium. Second, it’s a TV format that allows for a wider palette of visual and audio creativity. Finally, the larger files means that transferring the TV shows to the new high-def DVD formats will be easy and virtually cost-free. For now though, almost all Corus shows are shipped in standard definition 4:3. “You need to fill the screen for children,” says Dyer, with a chuckle. “If you letterbox a show, a lot of kids think there’s something wrong with the TV.”

Because high-end software and hardware has become (and *continues* to become) ever more affordable, smaller independents such as Portsmouth, NH-based Hatchling Studios can be players in HD animation as well. The company’s short, *The Toll*, was runner-up for Best HD Animation at this year’s iteration of the traveling festival HDFEST. Because of Hatchling’s lower, not-in-L.A. overhead, company CEO and producer Marc Dole says that, like his Irish counterpart, he can deliver HD for a mere five percent over and above an SD budget. “When we

tell potential clients that, their interest really perks up,” he says.

To make the HD transition, Dole spent \$80,000 on computer and hardware upgrades and another \$50,000 on Hatchling’s improved render farm. “The enhanced rendering capacity lets our crew focus on the visuals and not data management,” Dole says. Even so, it still took four months to render the multiple passes on *The Toll*’s 10,000 frames at 1080p, 24 frames per second. In SD, the process would have taken a month. “Once you have labored

for two years on a project and you go to a festival and see it on DigiBeta, you’re very happy. Then when you go to a HD theater and see it at full resolution on a 30-foot screen, your jaw just friggin’ drops.”

Two of America’s biggest cartoon broadcasters, meanwhile, are currently pursuing different high-def strategies. Over at Nickelodeon, there are no HD toon programs and none are planned, says Alison Dexter, senior vice president of production at Nick. “We could do our shows in 16:9, and it’s possible that we may soon do this. But (for us) HD is really more about live action and we produce all (those) new shows in HD,” Dexter says.

As of January 1, 2007, Cartoon Network will produce all its toons in HD. Among the HD series to be delivered this year: *Class of 3000*, *Foster’s Home For Imaginary Friends*, *Camp Lazlo*, *The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy*, *The Life and Times of Juniper Lee*, *Squirrel Boy*, *My Gym Partner’s a Monkey* and *Ben 10*. *Juniper* and *Camp Lazlo* were the first series produced in high-def beginning two years ago. “While there are no immediate plans for Cartoon Network to broadcast in HD, we thought it prudent to be prepared for the future,” says CN executive vice president/general manager, Jim Samples. ■

Chris Grove is a Los Angeles-based journalist and actor. If you have any hot tips for Chris, he can be reached at edit@animationmagazine.net.



Bassam Kurdali’s *Elephants Dream* was released as a high-def DVD.

Colin the
Invincible

Two New Toons Heat Up Korean Scene

Last month, at a special awards ceremony hosted by the Korea Cultural and Content Agency (KOCCA) in Seoul, Yang Yeon-Soon's *1001 Nights of Folktales*, Heewon Entertainment's *Janggeum's Dream*, and ICONIX and OCON's international hit *Pororo* received the 2006 Korea Cartoon Animation and Character Awards.

"It was the production industry that used to lead the Korean economy, but this role will soon be usurped by these creative industries," said Myeong-Gon Kim, Minister of Culture and Tourism. "The Ministry will do its best to promote Korea's cartoon, animation and character industries."

KOCCA actively promotes Korean companies involved in animation, character licensing, music, comic publishing, mobile and Internet content development by serving as a global liaison between Korean cultural content providers and partners all over the world.

Two new KOCCA-sponsored properties are poised to generate a lot of attention this year: Character Plan's *Colin the Invincible* is a clever new series seeking co-production partners. It centers on a sev-

en-year-old adventurer who is described as "the medieval version of a younger MacGyver!" Targeting five- to nine-year-old audiences, the show will use a mixture

Tales of
Greenery

of Toonz, Maya, After Effects and Photoshop and combine 2D and CG animation.

"Whenever he gets into trouble, Colin always finds his peaceful way out with his brilliant ideas and inventions," says Character Plan's president Donny Lee. "When you're a seven-year-old prince, you'd better be quick on your feet or else you're dragon food." Complicating matters is Colin's sister, Princess Trixibelle, who insists on helping when all she does is add to our hero's troubles. London-based animation production outfit White Rabbit (launched

by Adam Selly and Sean O'Kelly) is the show's co-producer. Corsham Ent.'s Alastair Swinnerton (*The Tale of Jack Frost*) is on board as writer and co-developer.

Also making the rounds in the first quarter is *Tales of Greenery*, a 26x15-minute show which premiered on Korean public TV (KBS) in November. Winner of several KOCCA and SICAF awards, the toon was created by FFANGO Entertoyment, under the direction of producer Jeadae Moon. "The inspiration came from the natural warmth that children have when they share ideas with each other," says Iconix director of program development Mikyeong Jung. "The show uses puppet animation to reflect the sensibilities of children. We really want to express the happiness of young kids, which is different from adults."

The gentle-toned series is set in a distant village called Greenery, where five friends—an inventor, a painter, a cook, a pilot and a little girl with dreams of becoming a princess—live together and explore the natural world around them.

These two titles are part of the new renaissance in original properties in Korea. "The Korean animation industry is well known as a large service provider of world animation for several years," says Character Plan's Lee. "However, competitors like China and India are also growing at a fast rate. Many educational organizations are founded and supported by the governments in these countries."

As Jung further explains, "The Korean Ministry of Culture, through its overseas agency KOCCA, encourages the animation industry as a strong growth sector. Over the last couple of years, Korean animation has generated a lot of interest, specifically in the European markets. We are hoping to see the trend continue to grow in 2007." ■

For more info, visit www.koreacontent.org.

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The Padded Cel

The Cartoon World's Da Vinci Code



by Robby London

The role of children's television in the, er, *expanding* problem of childhood obesity is the current entrée du jour on the plate of television regulators. Last month, the U.K. banned advertising "junk food" to kids. And there is talk of doing the same in other territories including the U.S. Not to deny the *weightiness* or *scope* of the childhood obesity problem, but do you ever get the feeling that children's television exists solely to be the scapegoat for all of society's ills? Whatever the issue, we always seem to be the whipping-boy-of-choice.

But do all these regulators *really* believe they can stop our holy jihad to encourage every single bit of bad behavior we can—and create a generation of murderous fat sociopaths by promulgating violence, cheating, swearing, burping, s-e-x (shhhh!) and stuffing one's face with supersized fries while playing combat videogames all day? (Oh, to be young again!) Do they think they can stop us from achieving the joy, emotional fulfillment and riches we derive from ruining impressionable kids for life? Can they put a fence along the border of our evil creativity and turn back the subversive messages of our cartoons as if they were illegal immigrants to the airwaves? **FAT CHANCE!**

Because, you see, *they* are not the experts at *mass* communication to kids. We are! Nyah ha ha! Only we know the dark secrets of ... Fooling Unsuspecting Kids with Embedded Messages (which is known in some circles as F.U.K.E.M.). And so, to go over our evil plans, let's review these techniques right here—and they will be hiding in plain sight! Forget Da Vinci! We've

got the F.U.K.E.M. Code! If you work in animation, you already know these deep, dark secrets well.

1. Never EVER show bad consequences or punishment of antisocial or unhealthy behavior. Crime pays, baby!
2. Glorify violence, model utter disdain for cooperative conflict resolution and



Illustration by Mercedes Milligan

demonstrate the latest illegal torture techniques kids can try at home. We understand Donald Rumsfeld is available to consult.

3. Always show the guy who scarfs the MOST Cheese Whiz getting the hottest babe. (Feel free to reverse—or mix—genders and/or replace de-humanizing adjectives and nouns. After all, we are neither sexist nor *homophobic* evildoers!)

4. Design characters to be *thin*, so that girls will emulate the anorexia! Wait, that's not it ... Design characters *heavy* so that obesity will not be stigmatized and overweight viewers will have zero motivation to make healthy lifestyle changes! No, wait, that's not right either. Ensure characters are of *normal weight* to disenfranchise those who do not fit the norm, making them feel like outcasts, shattering their self-image and perpetuating their unhealthy behaviors! You know what? I'm a little confused on this one—I'll have to get back to you.

5. Two words: Preschool Borat.

6. Have characters use as much scatological humor as possible, but avoid scat-singing at all times. (Regulators are easily confused.)

7. Use Dr. Phil as your psych consultant. (His scalp is also good for motion capture.)

8. Always remember that as contemporary producers of animation, a sacred mantle has been passed down to us—a special torch of artistry, craft and commitment. As keepers of the flame it is our responsibility to keep it burning at all costs. That is why we steadfastly *refuse* to let trivialities such as originality, aesthetics, design, story structure, character arc or emotional theme interfere with The Sacred.

Mission—the fast-food tie-in!

Heh, heh, heh! With our secret F.U.K.E.M. Code, those regulators have about as much chance as Tom Hanks at this year's Oscars! ■

Robby London is a seasoned veteran of the animation industry. He is working on his new book, *The Strawberry Shortcake Guide to Anorexia: 10 Things I Learned From My Bratz Buddies*.



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Your Guide to the 2006 Oscar Race

[Part 2 of 3]



Will the Pirates Team Steal Academy's VFX Golden Booty?

by Barbara Robertson

Last year, it seemed impossible to imagine how visual effects voters could choose three films from all the amazing visual effects. This year we do have wonderful effects, effects that enhance the story without overwhelming the story. But, amazing effects? Um, not so much. Except, of course, for Davy Jones, Eragon, Angel, Superman, giant waves of water, explosions, digital cities, African animals and miniature cowboys.

Do you think we're taking too much for granted? We might be, but the Executive Committee for the Visual Effects Branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Science isn't. They honored seven films with amazing visual effects by giving the crews a chance to compete for an Oscar nomination at the annual bakeoff in January.

The effects include a return to traditional roots with in-camera work for *Casino Royale* as well as the most state-of-the-art digital work—in *Pirates* for characters, and *Poseidon* for water. Also sparking the list: Digital mutants (*X-Men*, *Pirates*), digital animals (*Eragon*, *Night at the Museum*) and a digital double (*Superman*) who proved CG is ready for its bullet-proof close up. Here's the bakeoff list in alphabetical order:

Casino Royale

Studio: Sony/MGM; **Director:** Martin Campbell; **VFX Supervisor:** Steve Begg; **VFX Shops:** Peerless Camera Company, Moving Picture Company.

Common Wisdom: The usual if somewhat more brutal fare of Bondian explosions and stunts shaken but not stirred helped turn this film into a thriller. The film tracks Bond's early days and, fittingly, it was created, as were visual effects in the early days, primarily in camera using real explosions, stuntmen on wires and a touch of greenscreen. Could appeal to the dry martini traditionalists in the bakeoff crowd. (And let's hear it for that dazzling CG-animated opening credit sequence!)

and sends her into battle against a smoky evil digital creature. The iridescent blue CG dragon couldn't save the spare, derivative story written by a teenager from the sophisticated adult critics, but she did save an empire in the story and soared into a legendary position in the Oscar race.



Night at the Museum

Studio: Twentieth Century Fox; **Director:** Shawn Levy; **VFX Supervisor:** Jim Rygiel; **VFX Shops:** Rhythm & Hues, Weta Digital, Rainmaker, Maestro FX, New Deal Studios, The Orphanage.

Common Wisdom: Prehistoric animals that come alive, an army of tiny cowboys in miniature realistic environments and a visual effects supervisor with three Oscars under his belt promised that this film, one of the final treats of the season, would be exhibiting its magic at the bakeoff. Rhythm & Hues (*Narnia*), Weta (*Lord of the Rings*) and Rainmaker (*The Da Vinci Code*, *She's the Man*) have done it all before, but this time, they moved the effects with comic timing. Could it be enough variation on the theme to extend this crew's happy holidays into Oscar season?

Eragon

Studio: Twentieth Century Fox; **Director:** Stefen Fangmeier; **VFX Supervisor:** Samir Hoon (ILM); **VFX Shops:** Industrial Light & Magic, Tatopoulos Studios, Weta Digital, CafeFX, Cinesite, Digital Dream.

Common Wisdom: ILM raises a dragon from hatchling into a femme fatale warrior as she comes of age side by side with a young boy. Weta transforms the digital reptilian teenager into an adult



VISUAL EFFECTS





Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

Studio: Walt Disney Pictures; **Director:** Gore Verbinski; **VFX Supervisor:** John Knoll (ILM), Charles Gibson (additional); **VFX Shops:** Industrial Light & Magic; additional vfx: Asylum, The Orphanage, CIS Hollywood, Evil Eye Pictures, Gentle Giant Studios, Pacific Title & Art Studio, Method, Proof, Tippett Studio.

Common Wisdom: Even CG mavens were fooled into thinking that Davy Jones was Bill Nighy wearing makeup and rubber tentacles. The fact that he's 100 percent digital should send this billion-dollar box-office baby all the way to a nomination. Plus, there's Davy's crew of digital half-human pirates all motion captured with ILM's new, director-friendly technology, a giant thrashing sea monster, pirate ships with billowing sails that were sometimes models, sometimes full-scale sets, sometimes digital, and an island largely created by matte painters. Say, "Eye, eye, Cap'n!" for this one. Davy Jones' all-digital eyes, that is.

Poseidon

Studio: Warner Bros. Pictures; **Director:** Wolfgang Petersen; **VFX Supervisor:** Boyd Shermis; **VFX Shops:** Industrial Light & Magic, The Moving Picture Company, CA Scanline Production GmbH; CIS Hollywood, Hydraulx, Gentle Giant Studios, Lola Visual Effects, Giant Killer Ro-



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bots, Pixel Playground.

Common Wisdom: Will it matter that the most sophisticated fluid simulation programs on the planet combined to sink this luxury liner and flood the ship's interior with fire and water? ILM's software developed with Stanford University and The Moving Picture Company's code combined with Scanline's fluid sims made it possible for Petersen to create his next gen water disaster film. ILM's digital ship allowed actor Josh Lucas to lap the deck during a long opening shot. Can it swim to the top with effects voters even though audiences didn't stream into the theaters? The theory may hold water.



Superman Returns

Studio: Warner Bros. Pictures; **Director:** Bryan Singer; **VFX Supervisor:** Mark Stetson; **VFX Studios:** Sony Pictures Imageworks, Framestore CFC, Rhythm & Hues, Rising Sun Pictures, The Orphanage, Photon VFX, Frantic Films, Lola Visual Effects, Pixel Liberation Front, Eden FX, New Deal Studios.

Common Wisdom: It seems so long ago that Superman caught a Boeing 777 with a fiery space shuttle on its back and brought it to a gentle stop in a baseball stadium, stopped a bullet with his steely blue eyes, battled Lex Luther and nearly died from kryptonite poisoning—but it was only seven months ago! Sony Imageworks' close-up shots of digital Superman flying through downtown Metropolis, Rhythm & Hues' water rescue, Rising Sun's young Clark Kent leap through the fields, The Orphanage's bank heist and Frantic Film's crystals could power this film into a nomination.



X-Men: The Last Stand

Studio: Twentieth Century Fox; **Director:** Brett Ratner; **VFX Supervisor:** John Bruno; **VFX Shops:** Hydraulx, Weta Digital, The Moving Picture Company, Lola Visual Effects, Framestore CFC, Cinesite, Soho VFX, CIS Hollywood, Kleiser-Walczak, Pacific Title & Art Studio, G Creative Solutions, New Deal Studios.

Common Wisdom: The short production schedule caused vfx supe John Bruno to do as many effects in-camera as he could, something he prefers anyway. Even so, it took a dozen visual effects studios to handle a battle on Alcatraz (Weta), Angel's wings (Framestore CFC), and all the mutations for these better than human characters. Lola Visual Effects stepped out of the shadows and admitted de-aging Xavier (Patrick Stewart) and Magneto (Sir Ian McKellen) in 99 shots. Bruno managed the mix with masterful competence, which might be richly rewarded.

No Love from the Golden Guy? Charlotte's Web's wonderful spider, rat, crows and talking animals. Too much like Babe, perhaps, but they were Some Effects. The almost indie films *The Fountain* and *Pan's Labyrinth* with beautiful but perhaps not-state-of-the-art effects. *Mission Impossible III*—go figure (is everyone still sick of Tom Cruise?). One always gets away, or maybe two: *Flags of Our Fathers*—perhaps the voters had seen one too many war movies. Other coulda been a contenders: *Flyboys*, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Invincible*, *V for Vendetta*. Look for shots from many of these films in the Visual Effects Society competition. ■



Vfx supervisor Jim Rygiel

Exhibiting Lively Museum Pieces

VFX master Jim Rygiel reveals the secrets of making the CG creatures of *Night at the Museum*. by Ron Magid

Some may see it as a surprising follow-up to Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, but in a sense, it was the only logical choice for Oscar-winning visual effects supervisor Jim Rygiel. After spending half a decade creating Middle-earth, he needed a good laugh—or two—hence his recent, if unlikely, forays into comedy, beginning the year with *Click* and ending it with director Shawn Levy's *Night at the Museum*.

The ambitious farce, wherein night watchman Ben Stiller is harassed by various exhibits that come to life in the wee hours, including an animated tyrannosaurus rex skeleton, a pride of African animals and hordes of miniature cowboys led by Owen Wilson. The work, which tapped Rygiel's skill sets from *102 Dalmatians* and *Rings*, might just net him another Oscar. "There are a lot of complicated, invisible effects," Rygiel says. "Rhythm & Hues did the bulk of it, along with The Orphanage, Rainmaker and Image Engine."

Museum's 400-plus fx shots almost invariably involve hand-animated characters, which Rygiel was determined

to keep real, especially when the African animal exhibit comes to life. "We toyed with 'Do we want to shoot a real lion?'" Rygiel says, "but we needed a lion, a zebra, an elephant and a monkey together in the same scene, which would've been very difficult with live action because you'd have to shoot each one separately. That's difficult to shoot as it is, but we'd have had to disinfect the studio after each animal. The main goal was to make the African

audiences they were looking at real African animals. "You can easily build a CG dog and stick it out there, but it doesn't look real until you start working on the mucous membrane in the eye," he explains. "Very subtle things bring it to life hundredfold, and it was sort of caring for all that that made these things look real. After seeing the work Rhythm & Hues did for *Narnia*, I was pretty certain we could pull it off."

One of the trickier effects was making the t. rex skeleton look alternately ferocious and cuddly. Stiller initially notices the extinct predator drinking at a water fountain, at which point it roars and chases him. "We put a lot of character into those bones because in the beginning we wanted to scare Ben out of his mind that this t. rex skeleton is running loose in the museum, but then very quickly it goes into puppy mode, starts wagging its tail and realizes all it wants to do is play fetch!" Rygiel grins. "Our main goal was to make it feel like

"You can easily build a CG dog and stick it out there, but it doesn't look real until you start working on the mucous membrane in the eye. Very subtle things bring it to life hundredfold, and it was sort of caring for all that that made these things look real."

—Oscar-winning vfx supervisor Jim Rygiel

animals look real, not caricatured. We wanted the lion to act like a real lion but hit its marks."

Fortunately, Rygiel had some small experience making a hundred or so extremely convincing dalmatians—so he knew what had to be done to convince

it's literally sitting there in front of Ben Stiller and not just a CG re-creation, but it's harder to make a bag of bones look like something, whereas when you have skin, you can do smiles and things—you have one extra layer to portray the emotion in. At least a mime



can still use his face! The character is all in his body movement, which could've been difficult to portray, but Rhythm & Hues did a good job."

Beyond animating the puppyish prehistoric skeleton, Rygiel's team created astounding miniature environments for Owen Wilson and his fellow toy cowboys and Roman soldiers. Even the gravel looks

unnaturally big, which gives the living dioramas a very real unreality. "It's the right scale gravel and grass and stuff for a diorama," Rygiel says. "We started with miniature sets so we spent a lot of time crawling around on our bellies taking photographs three inches off the ground—we had to literally cut holes in the model landscape to get our cameras low enough."

Entering the micro-world introduced a new set of depth-of-field problems. As Rygiel explains, "We realized we needed endless depth of field for our characters to appear three inches tall, but the focus fell off very quickly, no



Bones of Invention: The vfx team put a lot of effort into making the CG t-rex skeleton alternately ferocious and cuddly when it goes into puppy mode.

matter how much light we pumped into the model, and despite the fact we were shooting with still cameras."

So how does one create depth in a miniature environment? "We decided to do the whole world in virtual," Rygiel explains. "We shot multiple tile sets in-depth on the model landscapes: We'd look forward and then focus like ten times to get far and near, then we'd blend those all together, and then, that way we could control the focus on the whole thing."

According to Rygiel, the environments were generally all 2D matte painting set extensions, derived from

the real dioramas. "We did a lot of motion capture for the scenes of cowboys cooking around the campfire and playing the harmonica, pick-axing on the railroad—all those things had to look real to match with our live-action guys in the foreground (Owen Wilson and his compadres and

the Romans)," he says. "We then tiled several more rows, but the other 5,000 miniature soldiers behind them were all computer-generated using Massive software. It was tricky getting the real people and all that to blend in with the miniature world and look real."

Despite all the hardships, in a way, *Night at the Museum* was like going home for Rygiel. He offers, "It had that same cornucopia of effects as *LoTR*, all folded into a comedy." ■

Ron Magid is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in visual effects.

Fox's *Night at the Museum* is currently playing in theaters nationwide.



R&H India's 3D animated Amaron commercial (car battery company).

Cause & Effect

Rhythm & Hues' Smooth Passage to India

by Barbara Robertson

When the Los Angeles-based visual effects studio Rhythm & Hues first traveled to India around six years ago, the studio had outsourcing in mind, or perhaps they would find a studio to buy, according to Mumbai-based managing director Prashant Babu Buyyala. "We could see the potential, but people were just throwing money around, hoping it would stick, and the artists were working in sweatshops," says Buyyala.

A year later, they returned and decided to build a studio from the ground up, one that would incorporate R&H's set of values—good working conditions, health care, reasonable salaries, on-site café and so forth. "Blending in the cost advantages of India with the U.S. helps Rhythm & Hues be cost competitive," he says.

The result is a state-of-the-art facility in a Mumbai suburb in which artists contribute to

the ongoing work on Hollywood films being carried out at the Los Angeles facility. The five-year-old Indian facility has grown from three people to around 150, two-thirds of whom are staff artists. This year, they created their first 3D animated TV commercial for the Indian market, a feat that would have been impossible five years ago. "This was something very unusual for the Indian market," Buyyala says. "There have been few CG commercials and rarely have they been high end."

The first problem R&H encountered in India was fundamental: No one in India had created the kind of high-end visual effects that R&H had in mind. "They didn't understand what we meant by high quality," Buyyala says. "They were used to doing three shots a day, not three shots in three weeks."

Thus in the beginning R&H had the artists in

India work only on roto-scoping, wire removals and simple composites. Then, year by year, with training from the U.S. facility, they began to do greenscreen removals and full composites. They moved into the 3D world with camera tracking and match moving. And then, slowly, animation, modeling and lighting, working with Rhythm & Hues' proprietary software, which takes advantage of NVIDIA cards. Now, the India facility has eight 3D character animators on staff (compared to around 80 in LA), and these character animators tiptoed into the feature film world on *Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties*.

So, when director Vaibhav Kumaresh asked if they'd be willing to create a CGI commercial, Buyyala believed the timing was right. "I felt like we'd finally gotten the various groups trained in the 3D disciplines, and they had gotten enough exposure to all the different stag-

continued on page 46



Prashant Buyyala



Vaibhav Kumaresh

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Cause & Effects

continued from page 44

es to attempt something this ambitious," he says. "The only way to push ourselves would be to do something on our own."

Moreover, the project tied nicely into a long-term goal. "We have been interested in the idea of working on Indian characters and in developing an Indian style of animation," he says. "This seemed like a good opportunity."

The TV spot was the third directed by Kumaresh for Ogilvy & Mather's Amaron campaign. For the first two, Kumaresh, who primarily animates using 2D and stop frame, chose claymation and the campaign turned the car battery company into a brand name. For the third spot, Kumaresh wanted more characters, more scenes and crowds, so he decided to try a CG version of claymation for the one-minute film. He knew the studio's potential: Three years earlier R&H had hired him as a freelance animation director. And he was right. The spot aired in August and shortly after, won an Award of Excellence for short films in the professional division on International ASIFA Day.

Around 40, maybe 50 people at the studio touched the film as it moved through the pipeline. It took around two months to complete. "We were ramping up for *Night at the Museum*," Buyyala says, "so we had an animation supervisor from R&H training the team, and he helped guide some of our senior animation supervisors."

Otherwise, the India division was on its own. That was the point of the project, and it wasn't always easy. "In the past, things were set up for us as a black box," Buyyala says. "Now we had to figure out how to make decisions about what to do when."

Although it might seem at first that choosing a project that mimicked claymation would make the process easier, that wasn't the case. "Everything we did had to look like claymation and capture the director's signature style," says Buyyala. "So, the characters couldn't be clean and smooth; they needed to look like they'd been hand sculpted. And we couldn't create a model by doing half and flipping it to do the other half. The models had to be non-symmetrical."

And there were seemingly no end of models to build—more than 90 at last count—plus variations for the crowd scenes. The director wanted every prop to have its own unique feel, and he had a unique vision for every character.



Garfield 2

The characters are all caricatures of the Indian culture—a fat uncle watching television, Indian politicians, sports stars and entertainers. A well-known DJ is spoofed, as is a famous wardrobe malfunction that happened as a model walked down the ramp during a fashion show. "Everything tied directly into the Indian popular culture," says Buyyala.

For these characters, vehicles and props, the crew created 90 rigs—22 complex rigs for the biped characters, 10 for unique props and dozens of basic rigs for additional props. The DJ, for example, had controls for his hair beads, headphones, ponytail, cap flap and hood in addition to more typical controls.

In addition to rigging the asymmetrical

only. It made a difference.

"Everyone has more confidence now," says Buyyala. "Before, they saw individual pieces. Now they understand the bigger picture, so things are in context."

Plus, being able to work on an Indian project was a big bonus. "It's on TV so they can show it to their relatives and everyone can associate with it," Buyyala says. "I talk to people in India who are not in our industry and tell them that we worked on *Narnia* and *Garfield*, and they say, 'OK, that's cool.' The Hollywood thing is not their culture. But, when I say that we did the Amaron commercial, their eyes light up. They connect to it."

With 1.2 billion people in India and a growing

"We have been interested in the idea of working on Indian characters and developing an Indian style of animation ... this seemed like a good opportunity."

—Prashant Babu Buyyala, Rhythm & Hues India's managing director

characters, the riggers also handled vehicles that morphed from one thing into another—an Ambassador into a stretch limousine, a car into a UFO. And, they rigged a crowd for a stadium sequence. For animation, the crew primarily used bone-driven action with corrective controls, and they animated the fashion model's clothes using blend shapes.

As they worked on the film, the team knew that they could ask people in Los Angeles for help if needed—everyone in both countries can see everything from all the projects—but this time, the Indian side got moral support

middle class, Buyyala believes that eventually there will be a market for Indian animation. "They're being fed Hollywood work now, which is great, but they don't relate to it so well," Buyyala says. "I think there will be a tremendous market for entertainment and content Indians can relate to. I don't know when. But we'd like to contribute to it." ■

Barbara Robertson is an award-winning journalist who specializes in vfx and CG technologies. If you have a suggestion for her, you can email her at brobertson@animationmagazine.net.



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Tech Reviews

Toon Boom Studio v3.5

Over the past hundred years, the tools for animation have become more sophisticated, making animators' job easier and production pipelines smoother. Some software developers have decided that techniques

backgrounds, setup animation cameras and even cut to audio. This is within the program itself. You can also bring in outside material from scans, Photoshop, Flash or whatever. This makes it so a studio can utilize classically trained animators who feel more comfortable with paper—or matte painters

who may like Photoshop better—without retraining.

Whether you create the artwork within the program, or import it, the images are vectorized—making the linework editable and resolution independent—

exactly like Flash animation.

There are actually quite a few comparative features between Toon Boom and Flash, but mainly from a technical standpoint—vector-based artwork, timeline-based animation, etc. But, according to Shavonne and Kristen, the editing tools in TBS exceed those in Flash and are much more artist-friendly.

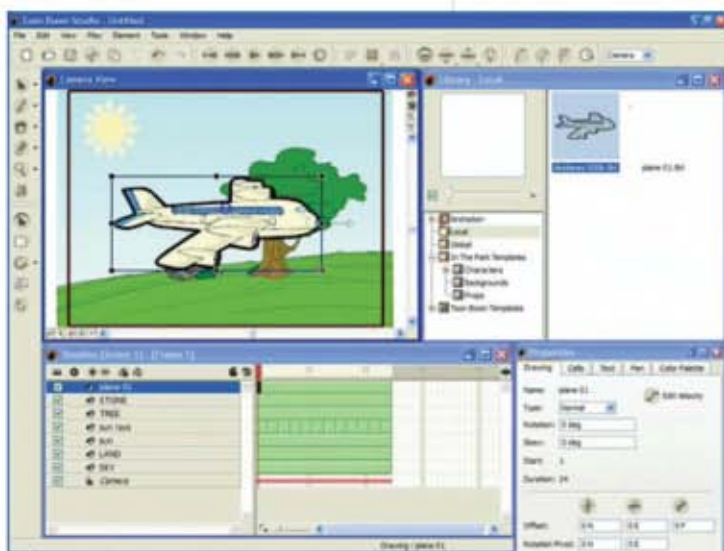
What stands out for me personally, is the animation camera setup, which allows for traditional animation direction using fields and compass values to indicate pans and zooms. The different artwork can be put into “pegs” (another migration from the old days), which can be

moved independently, or as a whole to create complex rotations and translations—a task which is tedious at best in Flash. The camera is calculated in 3D space (like a physical animation camera on a stand) and the artwork can be placed at greater depths than right on top of each other. This inherently allows for a multi-plane setup—another task that is near impossible in Flash without a ton of work.

Shavonne and Kristen say that the crux of the difference between TBS and Flash is that Flash is a graphic-design tool created to make animation for the web, while Toon Boom is an animation production tool that so happens to be able to create animation web, but also feature films, television and everything in between. The difference may sound small, Shavonne says, but when you are in the middle of production the original intent of the tools has a very clear impact on the workflow.

From my past experience with animation production, I can see immediately how effective the toolset in TBS would be. In Shavonne and Kristen's

by Todd
Sheridan
Perry



developed over the last century are somehow archaic, and that they know better. This attitude is detrimental to production. I have found, however, that the Emmy Award-winning team at Toon Boom Animation has been able to accommodate new technology while still embracing the tried and true techniques that have been used to create hundreds of thousands of animated features and television shows.

I haven't personally been part of 2D animation production for many years now, so I elicited the help of my friends Shavonne Cherry and Kristen Sych, who between the two of them have 35 years worth of experience—plus, Shavonne has worked closely with Toon Boom in production for the past year.

In broad terms, Toon Boom is an entire animation studio in a box. You can draw and paint animation cels, paint



more recent and involved activity with the tool, there is no question that Toon Boom is their tool of choice. And at a

continued on page 50

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Tech Reviews

continued from page 48

current price of \$329, its not all that much more expensive than Flash.

Website: www.toonboom.com

Price: \$399.99; Upgrade from Express \$299.99; Upgrade from Academic \$249.99; Upgrade from V2.5 or V3: \$99.99

Toon Boom Storyboard

A major part of animation production as well as film production is storyboarding. Storyboarding provides for a quick way for the director to visualize the story, which, up to this point, has been a bunch of words. Furthermore, once the story and structure has been flushed out, the storyboards provide a roadmap for the rest of the crew so that everyone knows exactly what needs to be done.

Normally, the director sits down with a storyboard artist, who thumbnails the composition of the shots and the action written out in the script. These drawings are sometimes put up on a corkboard to analyze the story as whole. From there, the boards can be cut in an editing program to gauge timing and coverage. In an animation production, this helps to make decisions about what to animate and what to eliminate—before the trouble and cost of animation is actually spent. In traditional filmmaking, it not only shows the timing, but also the coverage, so you know what you have to shoot on set.

There are some filmmakers who would argue that they like the spontaneity of shooting on the fly. But I find that it's best to have a game plan (the storyboards), and if opportunities arise onset, then I can waver. However, if I'm sitting there trying to make a decision

with 75 crew members on overtime, then producers get angry.

Toon Boom Animation knows the importance of storyboarding, as it knows the importance of a traditional animation pipeline. They have created Toon Boom Storyboard strictly to simplify and add to the storyboarding process.

First and foremost, Storyboard provides a drawing board. Like Toon Boom Studio, anything that you draw is vector based so it's editable and scalable. You might ask "Why should I use Storyboard when I can use Photoshop, or Alias Sketch, or any number of other software packages?" The answer is that by doing it in Storyboard, you have direct access to everything else that makes Toon Boom beneficial.

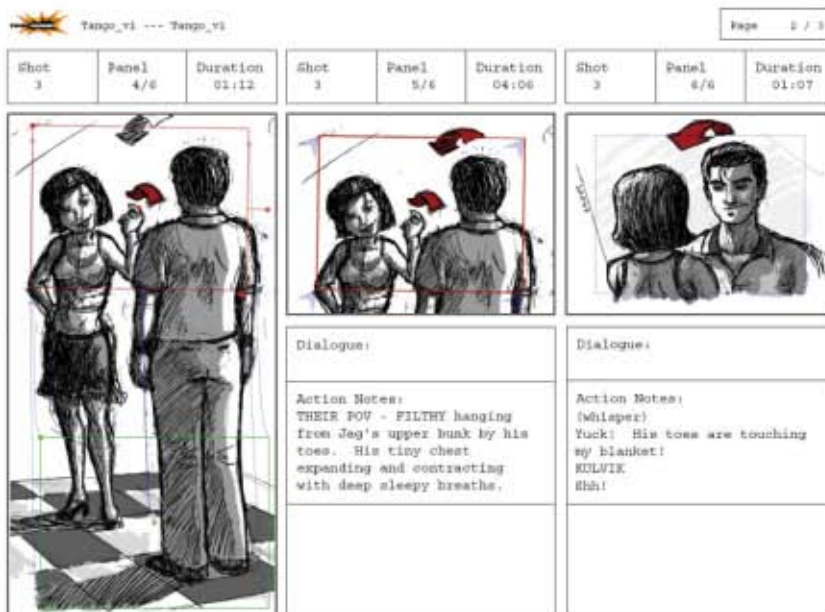
As you create your boards, information about the scene can be placed about dialogue, action and additional notes. Storyboard keeps track of the shot duration based on the built-in

placed on different layers, which can each be animated independently. Audio can be tied to the animation, so that the boards can be played back in sync with a soundtrack or dialogue.

Once you start building the story, it can be viewed in an overview setup, or a horizontal and vertical setup for printing purposes, which include all of the notes. As you draw or import assets, they can be published to the storyboard library where they can be easily recycled for new panels.

Once you have a storyboard sequence, it can be exported as an EDL if you want to bring it into a non-linear editor like Avid, Final Cut, or Premiere. You may also export directly to any number of other Toon Boom products like Opus, Harmony and Studio.

With all the benefits that Toon Boom has to offer, I would really like to see in the next version a way to import scripts from Final Draft or Screenwriter



timeline. Every board that is added is placed in the timeline and can be adjusted dynamically. Since time is now a factor in the boards, things can happen over time. The camera can pan, dolly and roll. Drawings can move and stretch. The drawings can also be

so that a template of scenes, characters and props will automatically be created.

Website: www.toonboom.com

Price: \$899.99; one-year support package: \$99.99; two-year support package: \$139.99 ■

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Digital Magic

Hot Animated Ads for Cold Days



by Chris Grove

When Wal-Mart showcases a farting bear in one of its TV ads, can the apocalypse be far off? We'd better hope not. Because the flatulent plush is a recurring character in two recent Aardman-animated spots produced for the retailing giant. The ads, created for movie theaters and TV, mark the first time that Wal-Mart has used branded animated characters for its advertising.

The campaign is headed by ad agency The Geppetto Group, which specializes in marketing to young consumers. Farting in various venues has become a hallmark of feature-length animated movies from the big U.S. studios, so its presence in the retailer's ads is hardly a move that breaks new ground.

Fortunately the main characters in the spots, Wally and Marty, have no apparent digestive problems. They are (can't you just hear the pitch session in Bentonville, Ark.?), two renegade elves that set up their own cutting-edge toyshop at the North Pole. While it may be dicey to dis Santa's crew, Wal-Mart can afford to take a few risks. With over \$300 billion in worldwide sales, its gross receipts account for 2.5 percent of the GNP of the U.S. That's a lot of breathing room.

The new spots are helmed by Paul Smith, a one-time iconoclast (like most of his Aardman colleagues) who reportedly quit animation school and taught himself to be a director by filming clay figures with an old 16mm stop-motion camera in his unheated garden shed in rural Sussex, England. Among other things, the spots allow Aardman to show off its 3D CGI expertise, something that often gets lost in the seemingly perpetual focus on the shop's signature stop-motion claymation work of Nick Park, et. al.

Early on in the production of the Wal-Mart spots, a decision was made to use a more classical, Warner Bros.-type background design to keep viewers focused on the story and characters. "The stylized nature of Wally and Marty demanded a simple background. So we dropped any fancy, photorealistic texturing," says Smith. For example: Painted rectangular

graphics were used to describe ice blocks rather than modeling each one as a unique 3D shape. "As a result, the spot has a cartoony, 2D feel, rather than (one of) show-off photorealism. That would have taken away from the characters," Smith continues.

Tech aspects: To make the spot, Smith's team used LightWave with some third-party plug-ins. Worley's FPrime was used for previewing and rendering. Sasquatch was used for the hair. Compositing was done in After Effects 7.0.

The company says that Wally and Marty are intended for use year-round. The connection be-

So to show the kids that they're keeping it as real as a software developer can, they recently hired the creative gurus at New York-based INTERspectacular to be part of the new advertising campaign, *Faces of Adobe*.

Not only did INTERspectacular creative directors Luis Blanco and Michael Uman participate in the campaign, they collaborated closely with Adobe's ad agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. *Faces* focuses primarily on the creative types who use Adobe's popular tools. "As long-time users of Adobe products and others, we have always seen soft-

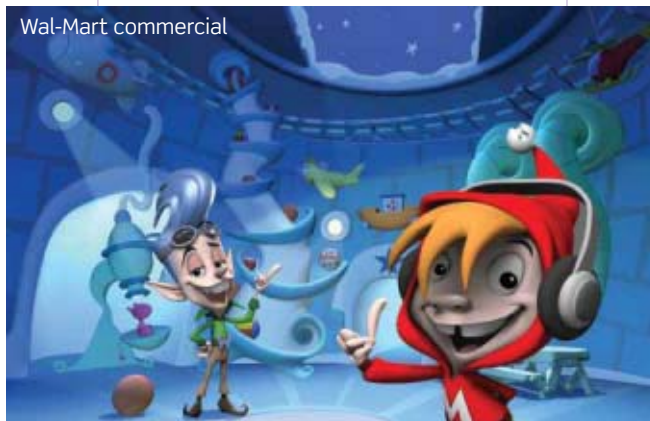
ware developers take a more conservative approach to how they market themselves," says Uman. "We were excited to see our work showcased, and happy to see Adobe speaking to the creative community in a new way."

In addition to the campaign, Adobe has just launched its new web site, *Creative Mind* (adobe.com/creativemind). The interactive results are a free-flowing, whimsical animated experience that shows off the new capabilities of the Adobe *Creative Suite 2.3* software package within the abstract framework of a designer's mental universe. "INTERspectacular was a perfect fit for the campaign," says Goodby creative director Mark Sikes. "Their work is original, smart and quite often hilarious. They're able to switch seamlessly from one aesthetic to the next and create compelling animated characters."

Founded in 2003 by Blanco and Uman, INTERspectacular has created brand and image campaigns for a variety of broadcast and commercial clients including the re-branding of Viacom's Comedy Central Network in 2004. More recently Target and Virgin Mobile have been clients. To see some of the lads' *Faces of Adobe* work, see interspectacular.com/adobe. ■

Chris Grove is a Los Angeles-based journalist and actor. If you have any hot tips for Chris, he can be reached at edit@animationmagazine.net.

Wal-Mart commercial



Faces of Adobe campaign

tween the characters and traditional holiday icons was just for Christmas 2006.

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FESTIVALS

Event	Date	Place	Website
Bangkok Int'l Film Festival	Jan. 26-Feb. 5	Bangkok, Thailand	www.bangkokfilm.org
Int'l Toy Fair Nuremberg	Feb. 1-6	Nuremberg, Germany	www.spielwarenmesse.de
Victoria Independent Film & Video Festival	Feb. 2-11	Victoria, BC, Canada	www.vivvf.com
Animex 2007	Feb. 5-9	Middlesbrough, U.K.	www.animex.net
Animex Student Animation Awards	Feb. 5-9	Middleborough, U.K.	http://animex.tees.ac.uk/student_awards.cfm
KidScreen Summit	Feb. 7-9	New York, NY	www.kidscreensummit.com
Dam Short Film Festival	Feb. 8-11	Boulder City, Nevada	www.damshortfilm.org
57th Berlin Int'l Film Festival	Feb. 8-18	Berlin, Germany	www.berlinale.de
San Francisco Independent Film Festival	Feb. 8-20	San Francisco, CA	www.sfindie.com
T.O.T.Y. (Toy of the Year) Awards	Feb. 10	New York, NY	www.toy-tia.org
DIY Film Festival	Feb. 10	Los Angeles, CA	http://diyconvention.com
American Int'l Toy Fair	Feb. 11-14	New York, NY	www.toyfairny.com
34th Annual Annie Awards	Feb. 11	Glendale, CA	www.annieawards.org
VES Awards	Feb. 11	Los Angeles, CA	www.vesawards.com
The Orange British Academy Film Awards	Feb. 11	London, U.K.	www.bafta.org
Animated Exeter	Feb. 12-24	England, U.K.	www.animatedexeter.co.uk
Katsucon 13	Feb. 16-18	Arlington, VA	www.katsucon.com
Anima 2007	Feb. 16-25	Brussels, Belgium	www.awn.com/folioscope
MegaCon 2007	Feb. 16-18	Orlando, FL	www.megaconvention.com
17th Niigata Int'l Film Festival	Feb. 17-25	Niigata, Japan	www.info-niigata.or.jp/~eigasai

Faculty Positions CalArts Program in Character Animation (Search re-opened)

California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) School of Film/Video is conducting searches for faculty positions in its Character Animation Program: Layout/Perspective instructor/artist (PT) and Illustration/Sculpture instructor/artist (PT). All appointments will begin in September 2007; the deadline for applications is April 13, 2007. To apply, send a letter of interest, a current resume, and samples of creative work to

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The crew at Glendale-based Renegade Animation (*Re-Animated*, *Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*) works hard at what they do and have allowed us in to their studio to witness the step by step process of how they go about making their animated miracles.



10:30 a.m. - The Renegade working day starts with the birth of a good idea. STEADY BOY!



2:00 p.m. - and once Scott O'Brien has finished praying to his robots...



4:30 p.m. - Duke the Animating Pig says, "IT'S FLASH-TASTIC!" Ha ha! Thanks Duke!



10:45 a.m. - The idea is reviewed and discussed in committee...



2:15 p.m. - ...the board is pitched - and pitched WELL! ATTA BOY SCOTT!



4:31 p.m. - With animation complete, it's off to Michael D who puts the whole thing together! HURRY UP, MICHAEL! TIME'S A WASTING!"



11:30 a.m. - Then, once approved by the boss...



2:45 p.m. - After the board is approved, backgrounds and character designs are discussed with amazing designer Peter Michail, who gives his input.



5:45 p.m. - The screening is a big success! Thanks to everyone for their hard work!



11:35 a.m. - ...It's off to the computers! Where we write...



3:00 p.m. - Characters are built and given moveable parts by John and Scott! AWESOME JOB, GUYS!



6:00 p.m. - Ashley gives us a reward for a job well done! We can't wait for tomorrow! GOD BLESS AMERICA!



12:30 p.m. - ...and storyboard...



3:30 p.m. - Then, after the animators lose their paychecks over lunch, they're locked back into their seats where they bring the characters to life! Wow! It's like magic!

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Glenn Whipp, LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS

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